



## The UWI Student Satisfaction and Experience Survey Speak Your Mind Survey (SYM) 2013

### INTRODUCTION

The 2013 Undergraduate Student Experience - Speak Your Mind (SYM 2013) executive summary report provides an overview of the survey findings of student satisfaction and experience on the four campuses of the University of the West Indies (The UWI). The data were collected online, via Survey Monkey, from 19<sup>th</sup> April to 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2013. The survey measured the experience of undergraduate students based on both academic and non-academic criteria. The university-wide survey was coordinated through a collaborative effort between the University Office of Planning and Development (UOPD) and the Campus Planning Offices (CPOs) on the Cave Hill, Mona, Open and St. Augustine Campuses. The questionnaire consisted of six sections and covered topics relating to the main aspects of student experience and the delivery of education services, specifically: Student Demographics, Student Orientation and Administrative Services, Academic Support Services, Non-Academic Support Services, Degree Programmes and Overall Student Satisfaction.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

The main objectives of the SYM 2013 were (1) to determine how satisfied the UWI undergraduate students were with their experiences on the various campuses and by extension the university (2) to encourage feedback on which educational experiences have been beneficial or deficient, and on the basis of such information, and (3) devise ways and means to serve the undergraduate population more efficiently.

### SURVEY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A student list-frame was developed from 36,309 active undergraduate student and a 10% stratified random sample applied. Stratification was at the Campus, Faculties and Sex strata. Students in the first, second and third year of the academic programme were identified along with Medical Sciences students in their 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year. Students were first sent email invitations to participate. The margin of error was set at +/- 5 per cent with a 95 per cent confidence level. A proposed 20 per cent response rate was estimated.

### RESPONSE RATES

Approximately 2,206 responses were received. The university response rate was calculated at approximately 21%. With regards to campus participation, the St. Augustine campus had the highest of 847 students or 23.5% response rate; the Mona campus was second with 807 students or 23.2% response rate; the Cave Hill campus had a total of 314 students or 14.5% of response rate. The Open Campus recorded 238 students or a 17.8% response rate.

#### Response Rate by Campus

Campus	Total Number of Students	10% Sample Size	Targeted Population	Actual Respondents	Campus Response Rate (%)
Cave Hill	7568	757	2160	314	14.5
Mona	12,420	1242	3473	807	23.2
St. Aug.	11,778	1178	3600	847	23.5
Open	4543	454	1337	238	17.8
<b>UWI Total</b>	<b>36,309</b>	<b>3631</b>	<b>10,570</b>	<b>2206</b>	<b>21.0</b>

### **SURVEY LIMITATIONS**

There were some limitations in the SYM 2013 survey which were as follows:

- 1) Low student compliance as a result of students not accessing their official UWI student email accounts.
- 2) Timing of the Survey – the survey was expected to be conducted in April for six (6) weeks. However, extremely low responses over the period extended the data collection phase to the 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2013.
- 3) The length of the questionnaire (13 demographic questions and 68 statements) may have discouraged students from participating or completing the survey.

### **SURVEY CHALLENGES**

There were a few challenges with the SYM 2013 which were identified as follows:

- 1) No funding was provided for the SYM 2013 survey which resulted in:
  - a. No comprehensive Communication or Marketing strategies deployed and,
  - b. No Student incentives were offered to boost response rates.
- 2) The availability of campus human resources to support the planning and data collection phases.
- 3) There were too many “Neutral” responses to statements observed; in some sections, more than 50%. This was probably due to respondent fatigue

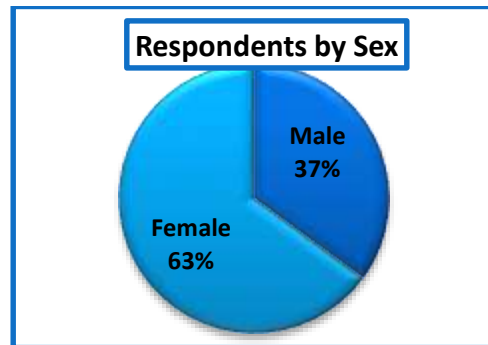
### **SURVEY SCALE AND SCORES**

The level of student satisfaction was measured using a Likert scale for each set of statements relating mainly to aspects of student experiences and the delivery of education services. Students were asked to rate the key elements of a number of service dimensions ranging from Very Strong to the Weakest Level of Satisfaction and from strongly agree to strongly disagree with statements.

Recorded responses of 4 and above were considered as a very strong level of satisfaction. Recorded responses of 3.50 to 3.99 were considered as a strong level satisfaction. Scores of 3.00 to 3.49 as moderate level of satisfaction and 2.5 to 2.99 were in the range of less than satisfied. Scores that ranged from 2.00 to 2.49 reflected a low level of satisfaction and scores ranging from 1.99 and less indicated the weakest level of student satisfaction provided.

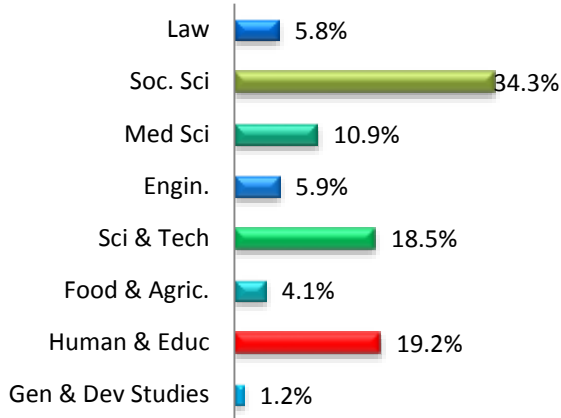
### **STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

A breakdown of responses by Sex revealed a total of 1,389 respondents or 63.0% were Female while 817 or 37.0% respondents were Male. This statistic is reasonably representative as it matches the existing overall sex differential ratio of undergraduate enrolment of approximately 2:1 in favour of females attending the UWI.



The highest total of 756 students representing 34.3% of respondents was from the Social Sciences faculty, of which 260 were males and 496 were females. Humanities and Education had participation of 423 students or 19.2% of which 111 were males and 312 were females; while Science and Technology comprised 408 students or 18.5% of which 199 were males and 209 were females. Medical Sciences had 240 or 10.9%; Engineering had 130 or 5.9%; Law had 127 or 5.8%; Food and Agriculture had 90 or 4.1% and Gender and Development Studies had 27 or 1.2% student participation.

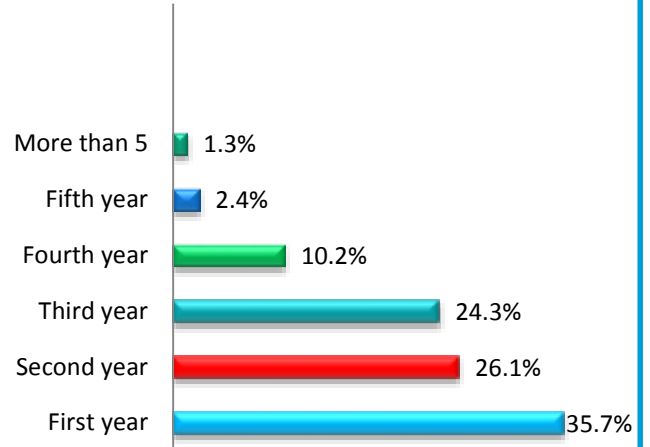
**Percentage of Respondents by Faculty(UWI)**



A cross-tabulation of students by Age-group and Sex revealed that 1190 students in the 20-24 age group recorded the highest percentage of student participation with 53.8%. The age group 17-19 was the second highest with 302 students or 13.7%. The 25-29 age group was the third highest with 279 students or 12.6%. The remaining age groups were relatively small comprising the 30-34 age group with 138 respondents or 6.2%; 35-39 age group with 102 respondents or 4.6%; 40-44 age group with 100 respondents or 4.5% and the 45-49 age group with 54 respondents or 2.4%. The 50 and over age group recorded the lowest with 47 respondents or 2.1%.

A breakdown of student participation by year of study showed that 784 First Year students or 35.7% comprised the largest group of participating students; this entailed 263 males and 521 females. Second Year students comprised 573 respondents or 26.1% this entailed 218 males and 355 females; Third Year students comprised 535 or 24.3% (537); Fourth year students comprised 224 or 10.2%; Fifth Year students comprised 53 or 2.4% and More than 5 years comprised 29 students or 1.3%.

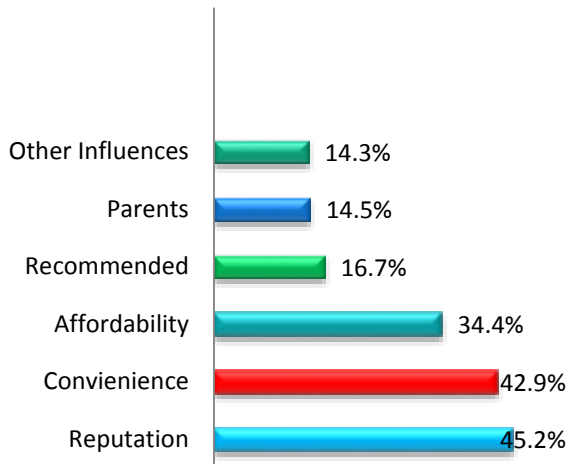
**Percentage of Respondents by Year of Study**



A total of 1939 students (727 males/1212 females) representing 87.8% of respondents indicated that UWI was their first choice university. However, 270 students (90 males/180 females) representing 12.2% of respondents indicated that UWI was not their first choice university.

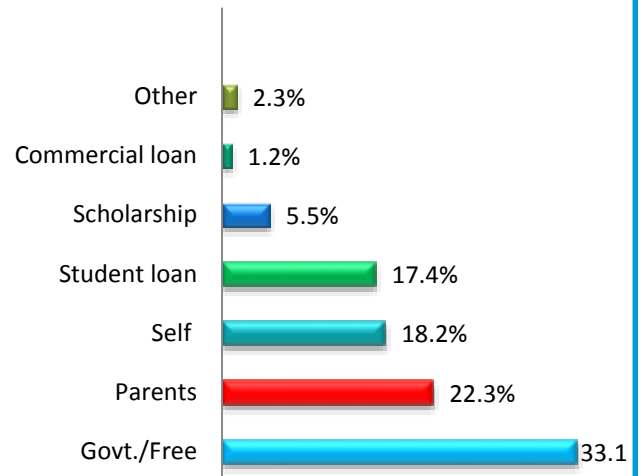
A total of 998 students (386 males/612 females) representing 45.2% of respondents indicated that the reputation of UWI as an institution for teaching and research influenced them the most in choosing the UWI. A total of 947 students (384 males/563 females) or 42.9% revealed that their decision was based on convenience. Approximately, 758 students (331 males/427 females) or 34.4% revealed that the affordability of UWI influenced their decision to attend. A total of 369 students (171 males/198 females) or 16.7% stated that the UWI was recommended by friends. The choice to attend UWI by parents was made for 319 students (111 males/208 females) or 14.5%; while 316 students (96 males/220 females) or 14.3% responded as having other influences for attending the UWI.

**Percentage of Respondents by Influence to attend UWI**



Students were asked to state their source of financing for their university education. A total of 731 students representing 37% of respondents said they were receiving Government sponsored free tuition for their education; this was broken-down as 275 males and 456 females. Four hundred and ninety-two students (171 males/321 females) representing 22% of respondents said their parents financed their education. Four hundred and three students (139 males/264 females) or 18% said they self-financed their education. Approximately, 385 students (153 males/232 females) or 17% stated that they had taken-out a student loan. There were 122 students (5%) on scholarship and 26 students (1%) received a commercial loan from relatives and friends. Fifty students (50) or 2% stated that they had acquired other means of financing their education.

**Percentage of Respondents by Source of Financing**



## STUDENT ORIENTATION

**Student Orientation received an overall rating of Moderate level of Satisfaction (3.09).**

A breakdown is as follows:

- The activities organised by the Office of Student Services/Admissions to help adjust to university life – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.14). (37% satisfied; 47% Neutral).
- The activities organised by the Student Guild – Less than Satisfied (ms 2.96) (24% satisfied; 48% Neutral).
- Academic support sessions provided by the Faculties/APAD – Less than Satisfied (ms 2.97) (28% satisfied; 47% Neutral).
- Library services orientation (Library info. literacy programme) – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.43) (52% satisfied; 34% Neutral).
- Information to assist in accessing off- campus student accommodation – Less than Satisfied (ms 2.88) (18% satisfied; 62% Neutral).
- Technology Support/Orientation Sessions (OC) (Moderate Satisfaction) (ms 3.13) (29% satisfied; 57% Neutral).

## **STUDENT ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

**Student Administrative Services received an overall rating of Moderate level of Satisfaction (3.27).**

A breakdown is as follows:

- Information provided to support your application to the UWI - Moderate level of Satisfaction (ms 3.40) (57% satisfied; 25% Neutral).
- User friendliness of the online applications system – Strong Level of Satisfaction (ms 3.59) (67% satisfied; 21% Neutral).
- The efficiency of the registration process (timeliness of offers, convenience of fee payment arrangements)-Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.18) (51% satisfied; 21% Neutral).
- The examinations process (timetabling, examination slips, grade slips) – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.42) (60% satisfied; 21% Neutral).
- Handling and resolution of student matters – Less than Satisfied (ms 2.76) (25% satisfied; 42% Neutral).

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES**

**IT SUPPORT SERVICES - received an overall rating of Moderate level of Satisfaction (3.23)**

- IT Help Desk – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.47) (42% satisfied; 49% Neutral).
- Course Management System (online learning environment) – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.29) (40% satisfied; 47% Neutral).
- Wireless Connection on campus – Less than Satisfied (ms 2.64) (32% satisfied; 24% Neutral).
- Student web mail – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.46) (61% satisfied; 29% Neutral).
- Technology enhanced classrooms – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.21) (42% satisfied; 37% Neutral).
- Student Computing labs – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.30) (46% satisfied; 35% Neutral).

**LIBRARY SERVICES - received an overall rating of Moderate level of Satisfaction (3.36)**

- E-Resources (online databases, e-journals, e-books) – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.46) (49% satisfied; 30% Neutral).
- Library collections in my field – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.29) (41% satisfied; 34% Neutral).
- Library technologies (library computers, off-campus access to e-resources) – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.33) (46% satisfied; 33% Neutral).

**ACADEMIC ADVISING SERVICES - received an overall rating of Less than Satisfied (2.97)**

- Student Academic Advising Unit – Less than Satisfied (ms 2.95) (31% satisfied; 43% Neutral).
- Access to academic advising during registration - Less than Satisfied (ms 2.97) (37% satisfied; 37% Neutral).

## **NON-ACADEMIC STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Non-Academic Student Support Services received an overall rating of Moderate level of Satisfaction (3.13)**

- Career and Placement Office Services – Less than Satisfied (ms 2.91) (11% satisfied; 49% Neutral).
- Health Service Unit - Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.40) (39% satisfied; 36% Neutral).
- Counselling Services (psychological care) – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.20) (19% satisfied; 47% Neutral).
- Campus Security Services – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.11) (28% satisfied; 35% Neutral).
- International Office (support of international student needs) – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.14) (11% satisfied; 46% Neutral).
- Student Financial Support (Scholarships, Bursaries) - Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.04) (21% satisfied; 42% Neutral).

**PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES - received an overall rating of Moderate level of Satisfaction (3.29)**

- Halls of Residence (comfortable accommodation) – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.09) (8% satisfied; 35% Neutral; 50% N/A).
- Teaching Facilities (Lecture theatres, laboratories, technologically equipped classrooms, computer labs) – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.41) (48% satisfied; 27% Neutral; 8% N/A).
- Sporting Facilities – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.43) (37% satisfied; 33% Neutral; 23% N/A).
- Entertainment/Recreational Facilities – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.22) (28% satisfied; 35% Neutral: 20% N/A).
- Student Clubs and Societies – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.39) (30% satisfied; 39% Neutral: 19% N/A).
- Concessions (food outlets, convenience shops) – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.18) (37% satisfied; 25% Neutral: 9% N/A).
- On-Campus transportation – Less than Satisfied (ms 2.98) (23% satisfied; 27% Neutral: 16% N/A).
- Book Shop Services – Moderate Satisfaction (ms 3.59) (45% satisfied; 29% Neutral: 11% N/A).

**DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

**TEACHING QUALITY- received an overall rating of Strong level of Satisfaction (3.59)**

- The lecturers are knowledgeable and competent in their discipline – Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.96) (80% agreed: 14% Neutral).
- The lecturers draw on current research and development in their teaching and use relevant illustrations and examples – Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.83) (74% agreed: 17% Neutral).
- ICTs are used effectively to enhance teaching in the classroom – Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.54) (56% agreed: 32% Neutral).

- Lecturers are available for consultation – Neutral Agreement (ms 3.20) (44% agreed: 30% Neutral).
- I am challenged intellectually and encouraged to think critically – Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.66) (63% agreed: 24% Neutral).
- Lecturers provide timely and constructive feedback – Neutral Agreement (ms 3.33) (50% agreed: 28% Neutral).

**COURSE QUALITY - received an overall rating of Strong level of Satisfaction (3.61)**

- The Learning Objectives were made clear at the beginning - Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.90) (79% agreed; 15% Neutral).
- Learning activities were sufficient to achieve the learning objectives - Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.56) (62% agreed; 24% Neutral).
- The courses cover the breadth of the discipline and provide opportunities for in-depth learning – Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.61) (64% agreed; 23% Neutral).
- The courses provide for the application of theoretical knowledge to practical solutions - Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.63) (65% agreed; 22% Neutral).
- I am confident that my programme prepared me adequately for my professional career – Neutral Agreement (ms 3.44) (52% agreed; 27% Neutral).
- The quality of instructions in most classes is excellent – Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.50) (57% agreed; 27% Neutral).
- I am satisfied that the assessment methods adequately evaluate my knowledge, understanding and skills – Neutral Agreement (ms 3.32) (51% agreed; 27% Neutral).
- Access to course materials is adequate - Neutral Agreement (ms 3.46) (57% agreed; 24% Neutral).



**CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF DESIRABLE ATTRIBUTES - received a Strong Level of Satisfaction (3.77)**

- The programme has improved my analytical and critical thinking ability - Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.86) (74% agreed: 19% Neutral).
- The programme has helped me to develop my problem solving skills - Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.82) (74% agreed: 20% Neutral).
- The programme is developing my capacity for research and innovation - Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.84) (73% agreed: 19% Neutral).
- The programme is encouraging my development of relevant ethical, social and professional perspectives - Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.83) (73% agreed: 21% Neutral).
- The programme has improved my writing skills - Strong level of Agreement (ms 3.62) (62% agreed: 26% Neutral).
- The programme has improved my skills in oral communication - Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.66) (63% agreed: 25% Neutral).
- I feel confident that I am becoming more independent and that I am taking more responsibility for my learning and personal growth – Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.94) (77% agreed: 17% Neutral).

**LEARNING COMMUNITY - received an overall rating of Moderate level of Satisfaction (3.48)**

- I am able to explore academic interest with staff and students – Neutral Agreement (ms 3.39) (48% agreed: 39% Neutral).
- I feel I benefit from being in contact with active researchers – Neutral Agreement (ms 3.43) (50% agreed: 37% Neutral).
- Students' ideas and suggestions are considered by lecturers – Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.52) (58% agreed: 30% Neutral).
- My lecturers treat me with respect – Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.77) (68% agreed: 24% Neutral).

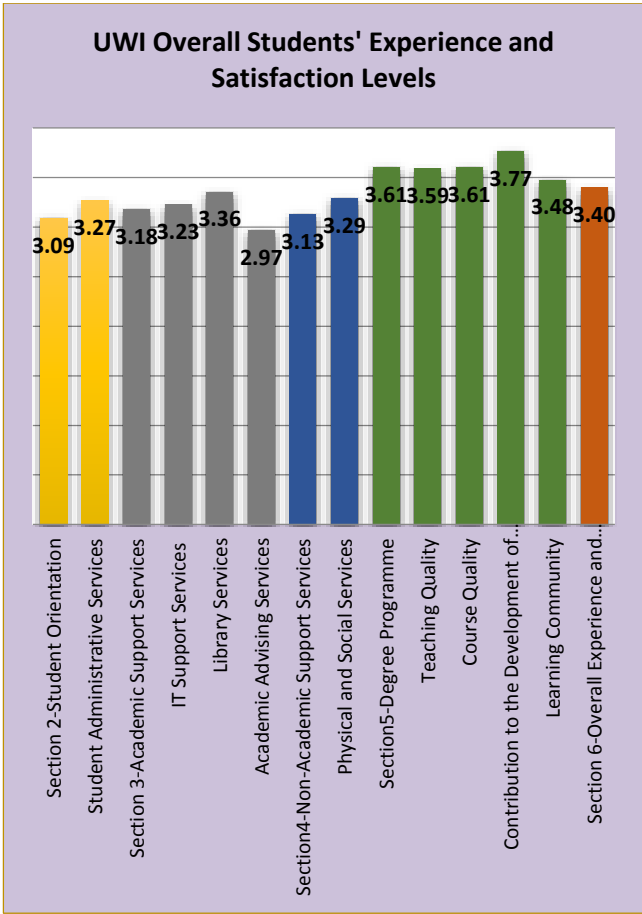
- My E-tutors and course coordinators prevent the feeling of isolation in the online environment (Open Campus) – Neutral Agreement (ms 3.30) (33% agreed: 59% Neutral).

**OVERALL EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION**

**The UWI received an overall response rating of neither agree nor disagree (Neutral – ms 3.40) to the six (6) key elements in this section.**

However, students responded with a Strong Level of Agreement to two (2) statements, specifically, (1) “they had no regrets in choosing the UWI as a place to study” (ms 3.61) and (2) “I am satisfied with the quality of the academic programmes” (ms 3.54).

- I have been able to manage the academic workload of the programme - Neutral Agreement (ms 3.37) (53% agreed: 23% Neutral).
- I have no regrets in choosing UWI as a place to study - Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.61) (61% agreed: 22% Neutral).
- I am satisfied with the quality of the academic programme - Strong Level of Agreement (ms 3.54) (59% agreed: 24% Neutral).
- I am satisfied with the learning support services - Neutral Agreement (ms 3.36) (47% agreed: 35% Neutral).
- There is a strong learning community at UWI - Neutral Agreement (ms 3.43) (48% agreed: 34% Neutral).
- The development of the new 2012-17 Strategic Plan took my views into consideration – Neutral Agreement (ms 3.10) (20% agreed: 67% Neutral).



**Note:** 1.99 & less = weakest; 2.00-2.49 = low; 2.55-2.99 = less than; 3.00-3.49 = moderate; 3.50-3.99 = strong; 4 & above = very strong

**CAMPUS COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

With respect to **Student Orientation Services**, the University received a Moderate Level of Satisfaction (overall mean score of 3.09). The four campuses each recorded a Moderate Level of Satisfaction with these services.

**Student Administrative Services** received a Moderate Level of Satisfaction (ms 3.27) for the University. Three (3) campuses, specifically, Cave Hill 3.31; Mona 3.19; St. Augustine 3.26 received a moderate level of satisfaction. However, the Open Campus recorded a Strong Level of Satisfaction (ms 3.55) for these services.

The **Academic Support Services** are provided by the Information Technology Support, Library and Academic Advising departments. These services recorded a Moderate Level of Satisfaction for the University (ms 3.18). This moderate level of satisfaction was also reflected on the four campuses. All four Campuses

recorded a Moderate Level of Satisfaction to **Non-Academic Student Support services**. Also, all four Campuses recorded a Moderate Level of Satisfaction for **Physical and Social Services**.

The **Degree Programmes** recorded a Strong Level of Satisfaction for the University (ms 3.61) and also on each of the four campuses.

The UWI recorded an **Overall Experience and Satisfaction** rating of neither agree nor disagree (Neutral) to key elements in this section. However, the Open Campus received a Strong Level of Agreement compared to the Mona, Cave Hill and St. Augustine campuses which received a Neutral Level of Agreement from undergraduate students.

**Experience and Satisfaction Levels for the UWI and the four Campuses.**

	CAMPUSES				The UWI
	Cave Hill	Mona	St. Aug.	Open	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
<b>Student Orientation</b>	3.11	3.04	3.12	3.11	3.09
<b>Student Administrative Services</b>	3.31	3.19	3.26	3.55	3.27
<b>Academic Support Services</b>	3.32	3.05	3.19	3.12	3.18
<b>Non-Academic Support Services</b>	3.11	3.17	3.14	3.02	3.13
<b>Degree Programme</b>	3.59	3.60	3.59	3.69	3.61
<b>Overall Experience and Satisfaction</b>	3.43	3.43	3.34	3.50	3.40
<b>OVERALL UWI Mean</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>3.40</b>



**CONCLUSION**

The SYM 2013 survey findings provided valuable information for future student retention and management improvement of services to the UWI student. The results also proved useful in providing benchmark information for the 2012-2017 University Strategic Plan and guide Campus Operational Plans. Survey results and their subsequent action plans will be used to help bring about education service improvements and a more efficient programme delivery to UWI students. Dressel (1972) reminds university planners that the institutional researcher’s *“ultimate success depends less on the research findings and more on the promotion of direct action”*.

The long term success of total quality management depends on the ability of the UWI decision-makers to communicate the results of this research to the respective areas and to provide strategic, human and financial support along with specific training to all its stakeholders to meet and surpass the needs of the students.

Given the present global and regional economic challenges facing the UWI, the University needs to be more student driven, client-supportive and be a more responsive learning institution to our main stakeholder; the students. The University must therefore be ever mindful of changing needs, greater expectations, the need for responsive services and global standards of customer service that is demanded by both internal and external stakeholders.

A comparative analysis of the UWI student services for the SYM surveys conducted in 2010 and 2013 revealed that the service dimensions experience and satisfaction levels, as informed by student responses, have remained constant over the period.

**Comparative Analysis of Experience and Satisfaction Levels for the 2010 and 2013 SYM**

University Service Dimensions	Overall Student Satisfaction Level	
	2010 SYM	2013 SYM
Student Orientation	Moderate Satisfaction	Moderate Satisfaction
Administrative Services	Moderate Satisfaction	Moderate Satisfaction
Academic Support Services	Moderate Satisfaction	Moderate Satisfaction
Non-Academic Support Services	Moderate Satisfaction	Moderate Satisfaction
Degree Programmes	Strong Agreement	Strong Agreement
Overall Experience and Satisfaction	Neutral Agreement	Neutral Agreement

**Note:** The Open Campus was not surveyed in the 2010 SYM survey.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is highly recommended that an in-depth assessment and or operational audit of the university service elements that have scored moderate levels of satisfaction and those with less than the required level of satisfaction and agreement, be conducted by the respective administrative departments/units to identify the various operational processes that may be affecting efficient and effective delivery of university services to students.

It is also critical that this information be effectively and strategically communicated to key stakeholders, so that an urgent action plan be developed with clear guidelines for implementation and achievable timelines at all relevant unit levels to facilitate critical improvement and monitoring (*taken from the SYM 2008 and SYM 2010 survey reports*).

A comprehensive University strategy, with an achievable action plan, should be explored applying international benchmarking for student service delivery and involving periodic review and continuous quality improvement protocols “at the point of student services”.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Prepared by: Senior Planning Officer – Harold Wall**