THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE EXAMINATION SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

The work of the Implementation Task Force has proceeded since its official commissioning into service in September 2005. There was wide circulation of The Report on the Review of the Examination System throughout the university and feedback was received from Campuses, Faculties and individual faculty members. A comprehensive collaborative response was received from the UWI.

Deliverables to date:


2. A philosophy of Assessment at UWI which has been included in a handbook developed for wide dissemination.

3. A proposal for team marking: this proposal has been approved by Campus Academic Boards and will be implemented as a pilot for specific large course groups on each Campus in Semester 1, 2006-2007.

4. Papers on the use of alternatives to traditional examination procedures, and particularly on computer based testing and the UWI experience with on-line testing. The use of on-line assessment is being explored further with a view to piloting this in selected courses on each campus during the 2006-2007 academic year.

5. Examination by course work only to be piloted by specific courses on each Campus (excluding School of Education courses).

6. A legal opinion on the return of marked scripts to students. The opinion was that this practice should not be introduced.

7. The Student Assessment Essentials Handbook has been developed. This provides helpful information on elements of the assessment process such as development of mark schemes and use of different type objective test items. The Handbook is to be placed on the Web Site and also printed for distribution to Faculty at the start of Semester 1, 2006-2007.
8. A proposed Schedule of training in Assessment by the Instructional Development Units within the UWI 12.

9. Approval of an increase in fees paid to Invigilators at Mona

10. Effective Semester 1, 2006-2007, insistence on compliance with the regulation that mark schemes be submitted for all examination question papers, and that these schemes be used in grading students' papers.

The following activities are on-going:

1. Development, by Faculties, of their own curriculum development philosophy and assessment guidelines.

2. Review and revision of the Examination Regulations.

3. Review of the roles and responsibilities of university and external examiners.

4. Development, by the IDUs, of a comprehensive training programme for faculty in Curriculum Development with an emphasis on Assessment.

5. Review of the arrangements made for scheduling and holding final examinations for increasing number of students.

6. Close monitoring of the Banner software system in terms of its effectiveness in streamlining the system of recording marks and grading and the adequacy of the information provided for students.

Matters for further discussion and decision:

1. Use of plagiarism detection software. One such package, *Turnitin*, is being used to good effect in the Faculty of Engineering, but alternative software packages are being assessed, paying close attention to the cost of the software and licensing, and the merits of the system.

2. Scheduling a one week study break between delivery of lectures and examinations.

3. Sanctions to be applied for constant delinquency in adhering to examination regulations and requirements.
2. *In-course final examinations:*

(a) Another possible solution to address the problem of physical space is a recommendation to hold in-course final examinations. Viewed as a rather controversial move given the focus away from the customary centralised examination system with independent invigilators and a cross-section of the student body sitting in one place, lecturers would now become invigilators and administrators of the examination process, a notion that would require a change of mindset. It is noted however, that in-course final examinations would necessitate ample seating and a comfortable environment in which students could do their examinations. Greater thought must therefore be given to this proposal in the medium term.

3. **Plagiarism Detection Software – University Wide Project:**

Due to the increasing prevalence of plagiarism, the Task Force has commenced

4. **Introduction of the Team Marking System:**

As of the 2006/2007 academic year, team marking would be conducted as a pilot on a select number of courses with large classes. Faculties will be engaged to identify the courses that would be most suited to this type of treatment.

5. **Preparation of mark schemes by Examiners:**

The requirement for the preparation of mark schemes by Examiners will be enforced in the next academic year. The University Registrar through the Examination Registrars will remind Faculties and Departments that they must comply with this requirement. The Instructional Development Units will further reinforce the importance of mark schemes by mounting training workshops and preparing guidelines. Additionally, the IDU has been organising training workshops in the preparation of Multiple Choice Questions, curriculum development and review and by early June, the Units’ target audience will extend to lecturers and tutors located in the UWI 12. Much of the material on pedagogy, testing and measurement has been documented in a comprehensive *Student Assessment Essentials Handbook* to be published in time for the start of Semester I 2006/2007.

6. **Role of the External and University Examiners:**
Over the years, the performance of the role of External and University Examiner has been performed in a capricious manner, with some Examiners preparing and submitting reports and others not. The Task Force is of the view that the role of these Examiners should be reviewed in order that the substantive issues could be properly addressed. A four-person committee has been set up to evaluate the pertinent issues.