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**GLOBALISATION AND BORDERLESS
HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE
ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN: THE
UWI OPEN CAMPUS CHALLENGE**

**GLOBALIZACIÓN Y EDUCACION
SUPERIOR SIN FRONTERAS EN EL
CARIBE ANGLOPARLANTE: EL RETO
DE LA SEDE ABIERTA DE LA
UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS INDIAS
OCCIDENTALES**

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OPEN CAMPUS

EL CAMPUS ABIERTO DE LA
UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES

ABSTRACT

The Higher Education landscape in the Anglophone Caribbean has been transformed dramatically in the 21st Century. The end of the 20th century saw traditional approaches to higher education being questioned and replaced by an aggressive growth in the penetration of extra-regional institutions into the Caribbean, normally the stronghold of the University of the West Indies (UWI) in the 15 English Speaking countries which contribute to the UWI. A selective review of the literature on Globalisation and the liberalisation of trade in services, particularly through the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), indicate the challenges that faced the University of the West Indies in crafting its strategic plan for the period 2007-2012. The competitive environment in higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean and the increasing demand for the UWI to balance the need for high quality accessible education within its constituency is reflected in the internal and national discourse between 2000 and 2007. The role of the UWI in its approach to expansion, both within the Caribbean as well as internationally is examined in the context of its response to the challenges faced by the growth in borderless higher education in the Caribbean. Although the UWI is seen as being responsive to the competitive threat of extra-regional (and indeed national and intra-regional developments in higher education), the paper proposes that the formation of the UWI Open Campus repre-

sents an opportunity for the UWI to respond to the needs for widened access to higher education in its constituency as well as to mount in a pro-active way a challenge in borderless higher education both in the region and extra-regionally.

RESUMEN

El panorama de la educación superior en el Caribe angloparlante ha cambiado dramáticamente en el siglo XXI. Hacia finales del siglo XX los enfoques tradicionales hacia la educación superior se vieron cuestionados y fueron reemplazados por un agresivo desarrollo en la penetración de instituciones externas a la región del Caribe, cuyo dominio natural había estado en manos de la Universidad de las Indias Occidentales (UWI, por sus siglas en inglés) en los quince países de habla inglesa que contribuyen con la UWI. Una revisión selectiva de la literatura sobre la globalización y la liberalización del comercio de los servicios, particularmente en virtud del Acuerdo General sobre el Comercio de los Servicios (GATS, por sus siglas en inglés), señala los retos que enfrentó la UWI en la elaboración de su plan estratégico para el período 2007-2012. El ambiente competitivo de la educación superior en el Caribe angloparlante y la creciente demanda para que la UWI equilibra la necesidad de educación accesible y de alta calidad dentro de su circunscripción quedan reflejados en lo que se dijo interna y nacionalmente entre los años 2000 y 2007. El papel de la UWI en su enfoque hacia la expansión, no sólo dentro del Caribe sino también en el ámbito internacional, es examinado en el contexto de su respuesta a los retos que enfrenta el desarrollo de la educación superior sin fronteras en el Caribe. Aunque se percibe que la UWI responde a la amenaza competitiva de desarro-

llos universitarios fuera de la región (y en realidad nacionales y dentro de la región), el documento propone que la formación del Campus Abierto de la UWI representa una oportunidad para que la UWI responda a las necesidades de un acceso ampliado a la educación superior en su circunscripción, como también para que se convierta, de un modo proactivo, en un reto para una educación superior sin fronteras, dentro y fuera de la región

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INTRODUCTION

The paper undertakes a critical examination of the decision of the University of the West Indies (UWI) to move into a Mode 1 form of programme delivery. According to the General Agreement in Trade and Services (GATS) classification, Mode 1 delivery refers to the cross border supply of education, under which distance and on-line delivery falls. (Table 1 gives a full listing of the four modes of delivery defined by GATS). It also examines some of the opportunities and risks faced by the UWI in the development of the Open Campus, and it does so in the context of the liberalisation of trade in higher educational services. Although the paper does not intend to give a detailed discussion of the globalisation phenomenon, it attempts to use it and the GATS as a platform to discuss the changes occurring in the higher education environment. An exploration of the growing competition in the higher education industry and the growth in borderless higher education is used to develop a framework for situating the UWI's newest initiative – the creation of an Open Campus.

The paper draws on literature on the globalisation phenomenon from an interdisciplinary perspective. In addition, literature exploring the GATS and its effects on transborder higher education internationally and with specific reference to the developing world and the Anglophone Caribbean in particular is discussed in some depth.

In evaluating the Open Campus' potential given this context, the paper seeks to explore elements of teaching and learning, structure, marketing and technological capability of virtual universities in the developing world. Specifically, the paper seeks to respond to three research questions.

- What are the primary motivating factors for the development of the Open Campus in the University of the West Indies?
- What opportunities will the Open Campus be able to grasp in the globalised and competitive environment of Higher Education in the Caribbean and internationally?
- What are the risks that the Open Campus will face or take in order to achieve the goals set out?

RESEARCH APPROACH ADOPTED

The literature on globalisation in the cultural, social, political and economic environment is surveyed. In particular, the work of Held and McGrew (2003, 2007) is seminal to the discussion of the phenomenon of globalisation. The effect of globalisation on higher education and the commercialisation of teaching and learning is examined through a number of works including those of Naidoo (2003, 2007) and Marginson et al. (2006, 2007). The Observatory on Higher Education provides a rich resource of studies on the GATS and the effects on the developing world, with particular emphasis being placed on the groundbreaking work of Jane Knight and the thorough study of the Latin American and Caribbean environment by Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta (June 2007).

A survey was used to solicit the views of members of the executive and senior management and administration of the University of the West Indies in relation to the role that globalisation has played in the University's decision to launch this Open Campus. Information obtained from this survey helps to identify in later sections of the paper some of the key risks and opportunities facing the University in this innovative venture. The questionnaire sought to identify common areas of agreement on the challenges that the leadership of the UWI at various levels expected to face in the operationalisation of the Open Campus in August 2008.

Other empirical data collected came from internal U.W.I. documentation, including the Strategic Plan for 2007-2012, private memoranda, and papers prepared for the University Council meetings.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND GLOBALISATION

The link between higher education and globalisation is one that has not always been clearly defined in the socio-political and economics literature on globalisation. Held and McGrew (2003) espouse a primarily political definition of globalisation, stressing the transborder movements of social, economic and political activities. Further, Held and McGrew, supported by other “globalists” (Isaak, 2005; Keohane and Nye, Jr., 2003) indicate that the signal feature of globalisation is the speeding up of global interconnectedness (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Peralta, 2003) or the “death of distance” (Held, McGrew, 2007, p.43).

The role of Higher Education is at least implied in the literature which seeks to interrogate the effects that this “phenomenon” of globalisation has had on culture, knowledge creation and dissemination (Bhagwati, 2004; Isaak 2005, Tomlinson, 2003). The ascendancy of the knowledge economy is described equally as a response to, an outcome of and in some cases a necessary myth emanating from globalisation (Hirst and Thompson, 2003; Tomlinson, 2003). However there is general agreement that globalisation requires that societies respond rapidly to the technological imperatives created by global competition. The consensus among writers is that globalisation has ushered in an era of “learning how to learn quickly or learning to fail quickly” (Isaak, 2005, p. 148).

To the extent that these views capture the reality of globalisation, many pressures therefore are exerted on higher education. Although the early scholars of the globalisation phenomenon often allude to the need for the knowledge economy to be driven by technological and educative forces, it is only fairly recently that the role of higher education in this transformation process has been more clearly linked to the socio-economic and political drivers which affect countries and, in particular, developing nations. Indeed, increasingly in this discourse, higher education is seen both as saviour and victim of globalisation. Naidoo (2003) sums up this view of higher education in the new consumerist world created by globalisation in the following way:

The perception of higher education as an industry for enhancing national competitiveness and as a lucrative service that can be sold in the global marketplace has begun to eclipse the social and cultural objectives of higher education generally encompassed in the conception of higher education as a ‘public good’ (p. 250)

Here the lines are drawn clearly. On the one hand higher education and specifically the University are seen as a developmental tool for nations to educate their populations in order to be competitive in the marketplace. On the other hand, higher education, particularly in the OECD countries, is itself being transformed by the very forces that it seeks to control.

The “accelerating pace of transborder interactions and processes” (Held & McGrew, 2007) is now extended to national institutions of higher education which traditionally were concerned with mainstream teaching and research for the normal post secondary students in the 18-24 age cohort in a collegial environment. Globalisation is transforming the traditional higher education sector to one that, like the economies of the nation states, must transform itself to compete in the liberalised higher education market, while maintaining its mandate to develop the necessary knowledge sources to allow its host country to compete globally.

As governments put more pressure on higher education institutions to increase access because of their own “social objectives, economic development and world competitiveness” (Marginson, 2007), Universities are seen to be adopting a business model which, as Naidoo (2007) points out, “[has] propelled universities to function less as institutions with social, cultural and indeed intellectual objectives and more as producers of commodities that can be sold in the international marketplace” (p.4).

The “commodification” of higher education has both a positive and negative effect on nation states. In responding to market forces, it is often argued that higher education can only increase access by adopting this model which focuses less on the ‘public good’ (Knight, 2002; Naidoo 2003) element of a university education, and more on a market driven, competitive confrontation of the hostile forces of globalisation.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE GATS EFFECT

The transformation of the higher education sector into an industry was recognised with the inclusion of higher education in the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) signed in 1995, coming out of the Uruguay round of the WTO. (Knight, 2002). In its inclusion of education as a service subject to trade liberalisation, the GATS set the stage for a paradigm shift in the provision of higher education on an international scale. Knight succinctly summarises the four modes of delivery of higher education services that the GATS addresses in the following table:

TABLE 1: MODE OF SUPPLY (KNIGHT, 2002, P. 5)

Mode of Supply According to GATS	Explanation	Examples in Higher Education	Size/Potential of Market
1. Cross Border Supply	the provision of a service where the service crosses the border (does not require the physical movement of the consumer	Distance education - e-learning -virtual universities	-currently a relatively small market -seen to have great potential through the use of new ICTs and especially the Internet
2. Consumption Abroad	-provision of the service involving the movement of the consumer to the country of the supplier	-students who go to another country to study	currently represents the largest share of the global market for education services
3. Commercial Presence	-the service provider establishes or has presence of commercial facilities in another country in order to render service	-local branch or satellite campuses twinning partnerships - franchising arrangements with local institutions	-growing interest and strong potential for future growth -most controversial as it appears to set international rules on foreign investment
4. Presence of Natural Persons	- persons travelling to another country on a temporary basis to provide service	-professors, teachers, researchers working abroad	-potentially a strong market given the emphasis on mobility of professionals

It is fully recognised that the GATS places the pressure on governments to transform their societies' global competitiveness through increased participation in higher education (Naidoo, 2003; Marginson, 2007) by liberalizing this sector. Equally, the GATS presents countries, particularly in the developing world, with several perceived threats and risks. The strong suggestion is that the "massification" and "commodification" of higher education threaten the very idea of the role of the university in national development as well as the role of the state in transforming its Higher Education systems. (*The Economist*, 2005)

The problem for policymakers is how to create a system of higher education that balances the twin demands of excellence and access, that makes room for global elite universities while also catering for large numbers of average students that exploits the opportunities provided by new technology while also recognizing that education requires a human touch. (The Economist Vol. 376, issue 8443, p.4)

Without doubt, the liberalisation of higher education globally can be seen as presenting nation states with several opportunities, primarily:

1. increased access to higher education without the attendant costs to the public purse of either developing expensive national systems or providing funding for movement of students to external universities, mostly in the high cost OECD countries;
2. the breaking down of the elitism reinforced by the divide between university graduates and non-university graduates through increased access, thus a larger percentage of the population receives higher education, creating the potential for more equitable distribution of wealth;
3. the development of a competitive national/regional higher education sector as national institutions, which, prior to the liberalisation of the sector, have had the luxury of “monopoly” status, leading to inefficiencies in delivery and higher costs;
4. the transfer of technology in the development of new modes of delivery, including e-learning and other virtual methodologies (Marginson, 2006, 2007; Didou Aupetit & Jokivirta, 2007)

However, after over ten years of liberalisation the jury is still out on the true benefits of the liberalisation of higher education and its effects in creating access, driving down costs and improving quality and technological competencies, particularly in developing countries. In the past ten years the trend in developing countries has been to concentrate on Modes 2, 3 and 4 in terms of the liberalisation of higher education. There has been an explosion of foreign universities entering the markets in a North to South directional flow. For Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta (2007, p. 13) indicate in decreasing order of importance the types of trans-national presence in the region:

1. joint degree programmes
2. provisions offered virtually or at a distance
3. branch campuses
4. franchising arrangements
5. corporate universities

The growing demand and market potential for provision of higher education services is seen in the relatively low enrolment in LAC compared to the OECD countries. Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta indicate an

average rate of 27 percent of the relevant age cohort in the region is enrolled in higher education in contrast to 55 percent in the OECD countries (p. 8)

Despite this apparently lucrative market, growth in transborder provision in Latin America and the Caribbean has not been as rapid as would otherwise have been expected given the obvious financial benefits to external providers. Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta indicate that the majority of transborder providers in LAC concentrate on “courses with minimum cost and maximum outputs” (p.14) such as Business and Economics. Additionally, in their wide study of transnational provision they have shown that the cost of education of external providers (particularly face-to-face instruction) is significantly higher than that of domestic providers. (p.18). Thus they conclude “Although it serves to satisfy some unmet demand, transnational delivery also exacerbates the enrolment imbalance in LAC, in direct opposition to widespread governmental re-distribution efforts within the region.” (p. 14)

This conclusion is also drawn by Daniel et. al. (2005) in examining the cases of India, Jamaica and Sierra Leone: “Judging from these cases cross border Higher Education is, at present, making a negligible contribution to the provision in developing countries of higher education that is accessible, available and affordable.” (p.1)

In fact, there is a strong suggestion that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are responding to the growing entry of foreign universities with a regionalisation approach, or turning “inwards” (Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta, 2007) as they have done in other areas of trade through the formation of regional trading groups such as the South American Free Market system (MERCOSUR) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Similarly, countries are implementing systems that would limit or control the free entry of foreign universities into their domestic higher education systems. Jamaica, for example, has a University Council of Jamaica that requires registration and accreditation of all tertiary level programmes offered in that country. Brazil requires a collaborative relationship in order for foreign providers of higher education to enter the country. A general summary of regulatory requirements is extracted from Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta below.

TABLE 2: NATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR
TRANSNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION IN LAC

Model	Regulations	Examples of Countries
1. No regulations	There are no special regulations or control of foreign providers, which are free to operate without seeking permission from the host country.	Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, most Anglophone Caribbean countries
2. Liberal	Foreign providers must satisfy certain minimum conditions prior to commencing operations (e.g. official recognition in the home country).	Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad and Tobago
3. Moderately Liberal	The importing country is actively involved in licensing and (in some cases) accrediting transnational providers. This model requires that foreign institutions gain accreditation or other formal permission by the host country (e.g. Ministry of Education) prior to commencing operations. This category is diverse, ranging from compulsory registration to formal assessment of academic criteria. Requirements are generally straightforward and nonburdensome.	Bolivia, Chile, Jamaica, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela
4. Transitional: Moving from Liberal to more restrictive	A more restrictive regulatory framework is gradually being introduced	Anglophone Caribbean?

Verbik, L. and L. Jokivirta (2005), National Regulatory Frameworks for Transnational Higher Education, Observatory on Borderless Higher Education

This research indicates that despite the liberalisation of Higher Education under the GATS, countries in the developing world are not necessarily benefiting from the increased access to higher education due to high costs, limited range of subjects and regulatory limitations. In the studies conducted by Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta (2007), as well as that of Daniel et.al (2005), the role of distance education and the virtual university (Mode 1) in accelerating that access is seen as having great potential for achieving that goal. The following section will look at the virtualisation of higher education and its challenges and risks.

THE VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY AND THE CHALLENGE TO DISTANCE

The growth in distance, e-learning and the virtualisation of higher education is seen by some scholars as signalling the decline of the traditional university (Wood et. al, 2005). Both studies by Daniel et al (2005)

and Didou Aupetit (2007) which focus on countries in the developing world indicate that virtualization holds the potential to meet the needs of these populations.

Whilst still a minority trend, the market for foreign on-line and distance learning has been identified as an area of potential growth, particularly in regions such as the Anglophone Caribbean where populations are widely dispersed. (Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta, 2007, p. 8)

Daniel et. al. also see the potential for the electronic delivery of services in education as changing the business model dramatically for this “industry”.

However, the appropriateness of e-learning for the countries of the developing world is questioned by many scholars. While Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta admit in their study that the cost of distance programmes is somewhat lower than face-to-face delivery, they also point out that in LAC countries the internet penetration is uneven and thus technology could also create an unwanted divide in very much the same way that high cost has done. The average internet penetration rate in South America is 18% and 13% in the Anglophone Caribbean. The rates of internet penetration regionally vary from a low of 4% in Bolivia to a high of 59% in Barbados. (www.internet-worldstats.com). This may lead, and some would feel it has already led, to a state where “those who lack access to the Internet are disconnected, marginalized, left outside...” (Marginson and Sawir, 2005, p. 286)

Other concerns about the appropriateness of distance education/e-learning are expressed widely in relation to issues of quality of instruction and homogenization of information in a pre-packaged form. Newman and Johnson further challenge the appropriateness of the “decomposition of knowledge into packages” (p 81) as well as the generalised view that e-learning is less costly. Their thesis claims that the costs for administering the technology are very high and negate the view that this is a more cost effective method of transmission of knowledge. Despite these arguments it is very clear that, as a response to the liberalisation of higher education, virtualisation of learning offers a very different business model that is likely to change the pattern of delivery of education. With delivery through the technology, Portaencasa (2000) points out that there will be a lack of emphasis on physical facilities which will lead to an explosion in the enrolment in Universities.

This argument however is discounted by Glenford Howe (2005) who sees the push towards internet based education disconnected totally from the bricks and mortar of Faculties as a “construct of foreign ideologues”, as is the case of the World Bank’s promotion of the development of virtual

universities (the African Virtual University). Howe's rejection of the virtualisation of education in the Caribbean is somewhat validated by the central argument put forth by Naidoo and Jamieson (2005), that the virtual university is particularly vulnerable to the forces of commodification and that repositioning it as an international service which operates on economic considerations is "inimical to high quality learning" (p. 37)

The impact, however, of the virtualisation of higher education on teaching and learning as well as research is yet to be studied. The general view is that virtual higher education is able to harness general undergraduate education and professional training, but is not appropriate for higher level thinking and research or to the expression of the linguistic and cultural diversity of a country which lead towards its socio-economic development. (UNESCO, 2004)

The final negative element often highlighted in the research is that distance education and e-learning delivery dehumanize the learning process and create a sense of alienation and loneliness in cyberspace (Newman and Johnson, 1999; Wood et. al., 2005). Further, the teaching and learning process requires the interaction between tutor and student in order for the student to acquire the skills transferred by the tutor, through an apprenticeship model of learning.

The project of virtualising higher education exhibits naive empiricism which ignores the role of apprenticeship and implicit, craft knowledge in the generation of technical progress and scientific discovery (Newman and Johnson, 1999, p. 79).

However, there is no doubt that the e-learning model is now the wave of the future that will seek to overcome the negatives of the 'distant' mode. The potential of the Virtual University to truly transcend borders is tremendous. Despite the various regulatory frameworks in the developing countries, the monitoring of e-learning programmes is extremely difficult for any regulatory body. One constraining factor for developing countries is the limitation of internet bandwidth which, arguably, has already led to the creation of a technological and educational divide between developed and developing world. In addition, the potential of e-learning to create economies of scale and standardization of knowledge can be seen as a double-edged sword: while increasing access it can also result in the homogenisation of knowledge which can lead to an erosion of local cultural values.

Some of these are the issues that have faced the University of the West Indies, one of only two regional universities in the world as it seeks to confront the challenges of globalisation and borderless higher education.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES PIONEERING DISTANCE EDUCATION

The University of the West Indies (UWI) was founded in 1948 as a College of the University of London. One of three such colleges created that year by England in its colonies, the major aim of the colonial power was to create a mechanism that would allow the colonies to develop an intellectual elite to guide the development of the countries (Sherlock and Nettelford, 1990). The first campus was established on the Mona estate in Jamaica, while campuses in Trinidad (St. Augustine) and Barbados (Cave Hill) followed in 1961 and 1963 respectively. Having received its own Royal Charter in 1962 the University College of the West Indies was transformed into the University of the West Indies serving fifteen countries in the region.¹

From its inception, however, the UWI was involved in a dual mode of delivery of education. The founders of the University, recognising the need for the University to embrace the dispersed populations of the Anglophone Caribbean, insisted on not just the residential campus model, but instituted at the same time an Extra Mural Department that would operate in each of the countries as the outreach arm of the University.

The aim of the Extra Mural Department was to provide adult education in a systematic way to all classes and conditions of persons across the region. There was, indeed, general consensus on the need to establish Extra Mural Centres in the so called Non-Campus Countries (NCC's) in order to provide them with access to higher education (Fergus et al, 2007).

Without a doubt, this model adopted by the UWI's founders anticipated the need for distance education and can be aligned to the modes three and four forms of extending education under the GATS classification cited earlier from Knight (2002). For many years the Extra Mural Department in the NCCs brought higher education to the smaller territories through visiting lecturers from the main campuses, access courses taught locally with the aim of allowing students to matriculate into the main campuses, and cultural and artistic exchanges.

In its evolution to face and meet the needs of the NCCs for greater access to university education, the University, through the facility of the Department of Extra Mural Studies, introduced in 1977 the "Challenge" examinations. These examinations allowed students in the NCCs to sit the same examinations that on-campus students would sit but without benefit of the face-to-face instruction that their campus based colleagues had. This

1 Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago

was yet another stage in the development of the UWI's distance education project that would widen access to the region.

The "Challenge" system, although instrumental in giving opportunities to students in the NCCs to matriculate into the campuses created a bottle neck in the system, as limited places on the campuses prevented some who qualified to enter the UWI. In 1983 another stage in the development of the distance education project was launched. The University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE) was launched from the Mona Campus. According to Brandon (1999), regular programming began in the academic year 1983/84, but prior to that there had been several years of piloting of courses using this modality.

The "Experiment" sought to provide students with full certificate and degree programmes particularly in the Social Sciences, available within the country without the need to travel to one of the main campuses to complete the degree. The UWIDITE platform was based on a blended learning model which included audio conferencing, local face-to-face tutorial support, and pre-packaged course material. Attempts at developing video conferencing capabilities were unsuccessful due to the inadequacy of the technology available to the University at that time.

The Distance programmes were offered through the Extra Mural Department in the NCCs and in stand-alone facilities in the Campus Countries of Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. This revolutionary approach allowed students to complete their programmes in-country without the need to travel overseas thus reducing the cost to the governments for funding higher education in their countries. The UWIDITE ceased to be an experiment in 1996 and was re-branded as the UWIDEC (UWI Distance Education Centre). Also in 1996 the Extra Mural Department was re-named the School of Continuing Studies to better reflect the evolving nature of the programming:

The change is seen as necessary to reflect more faithfully a less rigid distinction between the large number of on-campus and off-campus programmes and activities which are developing throughout the University . . . With so many of the Non-Campus countries, as well as areas within campus countries, located far away from campuses wishing greater participation in University life through distance education . . . , the lines of demarcation between certain intra-mural and extra-mural work are increasingly becoming blurred. (Memorandum to University Registrar from Director/Professor of Extra Mural Studies 7th July 1989, p. 1 as cited in Fergus et. al., 2007)

The UWIDITE/UWIDEC project signalled the UWI's first challenge to the geographical imperative of the Anglophone Caribbean to engage "the tyranny of distance" (Afterword by Professor Rex Nettleford in Fergus et.al., 2007) This technological leap offered great promise to the region to begin to face the regional demand for higher education in a globalised world. However the growing demands for higher education in the region were difficult to keep up with as the UWIDEC, with its reliance on campus based faculty and resources to develop its programmes showed relatively small growth in student numbers when compared to the on-campus growth at the UWI.

TABLE 3 UWI ENROLMENT IN DISTANCE PROGRAMMES
1997-2000, AND 2005 -2007

1997	1998	2000	2005	2006	2007
1,447	1,888	2663	2762	3236	3670

1997 – 2000 figures taken from Fergus et. al , 2007, p.102, 2005-2007 figures provided by the Project Office, UWIDEC

Although having a stellar start in 1997, the growth in distance students ten years later had not fulfilled its earlier promise, nor had it addressed the need faced by the region's students. Note that these figures do not include students enrolled in the School of Continuing Studies. In comparison, on-campus enrolment over the period increased by approximately 100 percent on average at UWI's three campuses in only the last five years with now a total enrolment of nearly 40,000 students region wide.

In 2004, the new Vice Chancellor of the UWI, began a series of consultations with the NCCs to evaluate the UWI's response to the region's needs. The findings of those consultations were critical to the development of the UWI's new strategic plan for the period 2007-2012 and provided the UWI with an eye-opening and critical evaluation of its response to the needs of the region in Higher Education in the context of globalisation. Many of the countries consulted expressed disappointment with the role that the UWI was playing in meeting the imperatives of access to higher education, particularly in the smaller member countries of the UWI. (Country Consultation Reports, Internal documentation from the Board for Non-Campus Countries and Distance Education). In the context of the goal set by the CARICOM Heads of Government to have at least 15 percent of the 18-24 age cohort enrolled in post secondary education and with the liberalisation of the higher education system, extra-regional providers had become a cheaper and less problematic way for the countries to grow their enrolment in higher education.

In his discussions with stakeholders the Vice Chancellor of the UWI indicated the disadvantages of the Anglophone Caribbean relying on extra-regional provision of higher education as follows:

Disadvantages of “Non-Regional” Providers included:

- quality of programmes uncertain (“unknown institutions” in USA providing distance programmes) – there was a need for a Regional Accreditation Agency curriculum content and programmes not directed to Caribbean development needs (limited relevance)
- risk of loss of most talented young people from the region (remittances cannot replace loss of “knowledge capital”)
- capital out-flows in payments of tuition/fees and support to extra-regional providers
- restriction of programmes to “what is profitable” (business, computer science) not what is necessary for national development
- loss to students of mentorship and role models of Caribbean origin (“psychic loss”)

(Country Consultation Report on St. Lucia, November 9 and 10, 2005, Board for Non-Campus Countries)

After the completion of 12 such country consultations, it was clear that the University of the West Indies had to restructure its offerings in order to respond more adequately to the needs of its stakeholders while driving innovation in learning technologies. The concept of the Open Campus was then proposed to the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the UWI in November of 2006 and the establishment of the Open Campus approved by the UWI Council in May of 2007. (UWI Internal documentation)

**THE UWI’S OPEN CAMPUS
MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT**

In the UWI’s Strategic Plan for 2007-2012, it is clear that the University’s management is fully aware of the imperative to transform UWI to respond to the challenges of the globalisation of higher education. The following excerpt from the Plan indicates the concerns of the UWI.

The following will be of particular importance to the UWI going forward to 2012:

- the dynamics of the knowledge-based economy and society
- the multiple impacts of globalisation, including implications of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)
- the public policy commitment of contributing countries to the expansion of participation in tertiary education
- the continuing revolution in information, computer and tele-communication technologies

(UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012, presented to the University Council in May 2007)

The development of the Open Campus is highlighted in the strategic plan as one of the four strategic areas of focus for the period, the other three being Teaching and Learning, Graduate Studies, and Research and Innovation. (UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012). However, given the bulleted points taken from the plan and listed above, it is clear that much is riding on the success of the Open Campus to transform the UWI into a more flexible, responsive and proactive institution. The Open Campus combines the resources of the outreach arms of the University, namely the UWIDEC, The School of Continuing Studies both discussed earlier, and the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit which was established in 1996 to develop collaborative links with other regional tertiary institutions.

Feedback received from questionnaires sent out to senior members of the executive management and administration of the UWI across the campuses and countries revealed the expectations for the Open Campus to lead the transformation of the University in competing with the global inflows of Universities by providing:

- access to the same quality UWI education through flexible means of on-line and other distance modes of delivery. Eight out of the ten respondents indicated that the move of the UWI into this mode of delivery would enhance the University's image as moving with the times and breaking out of the traditional modes of delivery
- enhancing the University's ability to increase enrolment regionally without the need for major investments in new bricks and mortar facilities. In addition half of the respondents felt that the Open Campus would be able to attract increased enrolment from the Diaspora. In addition, four out of ten respondents pointed to the growing demand for on-line and distance programmes in the private and governmental sectors

- providing the University with an opportunity to transform itself and the region to participate and compete in the globalised economy.

A quick review therefore suggests that in its Strategic Plan, the major motivation of the UWI in establishing the Open Campus is to service the needs of the University and the other Campuses in addressing many of the issues that it faces through a “virtualization” (Wood et.al., 2005) of the University’s outreach arm.

The Strategic Plan, however, also sets out another objective for the Open Campus which indicates the UWI’s entry into the arena of globalisation, the need for the Open Campus to operate not only on a cost recovery basis but to also achieve surpluses. Thus the UWI’s Open Campus could be seen as becoming the “private” arm of a “public” university. This internal privatisation mirrors the approach of many of the Universities of the OECD who have formed separate campuses and consequently are able to act more flexibly in the competitive environment. This model is seen in several US State systems (for example Penn State’s World Campus) and has the advantage of leveraging the brand name of the University while developing quite a different product in a niche market. It therefore represents the UWI’s foray into Borderless Higher Education where “geographic and sectoral boundaries are no longer as important [as] name, brand, reputation and quality” (Wood et al., 2005, p.431)

An aggressive UWI response to the challenge of GATS was advocated from as early as 2004, by the Principal of the UWI’s Cave Hill Campus, Professor and Pro Vice Chancellor Hilary Beckles (2004) who stated

It is widely believed that a market-driven philosophy cannot or should not be a core part of the ethos of UWI because of its deeply public functions and its reputation as a highly socio-cultural institution.” Again, this posture is obsolete as GATS mode three provision confronts the notion of a special relationship to public funds.

Despite having a well-established worldwide network of graduates, supporters and admirers, UWI has not attempted to go global with its academic product under mode three provisions. In this sense, then, it can be said that the institution has not attempted to use GATS to cash in on its enormous international intellectual capital. The rising number of mode three arrivants in the region is now urging this possibility and UWI stakeholders should expect it to respond appropriately. But in order to do so it must work skilfully with the rules of GATS, and seek the full support of its Government stakeholders. (p.11)

Clearly, the establishment of the Open Campus is largely motivated by the need for the UWI to grapple with and confront the challenges of globalisation. Additionally, the Open Campus has the potential to exploit the GATS and to transform the UWI into a global player in the provision of borderless higher education.

**WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WILL THE OPEN CAMPUS
BE ABLE TO GRASP IN THE GLOBALISED
AND COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT
OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CARIBBEAN
AND INTERNATIONALLY?**

The UWI Open Campus is entering a growth market in the provision of on-line and distance education. With the growth in access to the Internet in the Caribbean as well as the impetus for mid-career professionals to achieve certification or credentialing, there is a tremendous market for the provision of on-line and distance education.

The Open Campus' primary market is the Anglophone Caribbean with a population of just over 5 million spread among 15 countries. Air transportation among the countries is expensive, there are three time zones spreading from Belize in the West, to Jamaica and Cayman in the Central Caribbean to Trinidad and Tobago in the south eastern part of the Caribbean basin. The geographical dispersion of the Anglophone Caribbean provides an opportunity for the Open Campus to offer on-line programmes which would be more cost effective and scalable for larger numbers of students throughout the region.

Although the trend in the liberalisation of Higher Education under the GATS is towards the "even playing field" model for both extra-regional and intra-regional providers, it is safe to say that prospective students and governments are sceptical of insurgent foreign providers of higher education, particularly those with no history within the region. Many of the private sector employers in the region are still reluctant to recognise degrees from virtual universities such as Phoenix and Capella. The Open Campus of the University of the West Indies has a window of opportunity to enter this gap and leverage its reputation for high quality and relevant education. This opportunity is recognised within the University and was reinforced by almost unanimous agreement among the senior managers and administrators surveyed.

"The enormous regional goodwill enjoyed by UWI, and its history of community engagement, constitute primary assets that can be leveraged. The time is right for this initiative." (Member, UWI Executive Management team).

As is set out in the UWI's Strategic Plan 2007-2012, the Open Campus will provide the same quality of degree as the traditional campuses.

Students of the Open Campus will enjoy the same quality of instruction and receive the same qualifications as students in other parts of the University.

Differences in rules governing their studies will be related only to the differences in the mode of teaching and the requirements of their scholarly experience. (UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012, p.29)

Its programmes will be subject to the same scrutiny of the relevant quality assurance Boards such as the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) and the Board for Graduate Studies and Research (BGSR). (Creation of the UWI Open Campus, Concept Paper, May 2007). This process will serve as a strong selling point for the programmes to overcome the often expressed view in higher education circles of the inferiority of the quality of on-line programmes. (Portaencasa, 1996).

Therefore by leveraging its brand and name recognition regionally the Open Campus will be able to take advantage of the growing market in on-line and distance education.

DEFEATING THE LONELINESS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

One of the disadvantages of distance learning is the sense of loneliness, isolation and disconnectedness that students feel in the virtual environment (Newman and Johnson, 1999; Wood et. al, 2005). The Open Campus of the UWI has a strategic advantage over many other extra-regional providers. As "a network of real and virtual nodes" (UWI Strategic Plan, 2007-2012 p. 28) the Open Campus can provide physical support to its Caribbean student body through the presence of various Open Campus sites situated in each of the fifteen countries of the Anglophone Caribbean. With a complement of over thirty such "learning centres", the Open Campus students in each country will have the opportunity to interface with a brick and mortar representation of the UWI. These physical nodes will provide basic services such as computer access, access to library and on-line information systems as well as opportunities for students to meet each other at least once per year at orientation programmes. This represents a competitive advantage for UWI over other distance providers, who would have to expend large sums of money to provide similar physical access in the region.

In addition, the Open Campus Learning Centres will be a physical reminder to the region of the central role of the UWI in the countries' national development.

GLOBALISATION VS. REGIONALISATION – OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE OPEN CAMPUS

One of the interesting side effects of globalisation generally has been the tendency for countries to favour economic regionalisation to confront the challenges of the liberalised market (Held and McGrew, 2003). Through the creation of regional trading groups, small countries have banded together to be able to confront the challenges of the larger countries with more resources.

As a regional institution, the University of the West Indies' Open Campus is optimally placed to confront the challenges of the inflow of extra-regional providers of distance learning by capitalising on the economies of scale that it can achieve by virtue of its regional nature. Apart from the relatively limited market of the Anglophone Caribbean, the Open Campus also has a major opportunity to link into the Diaspora of Caribbean peoples everywhere. In that market, the brand name and image of the UWI will have much currency as members of the Diaspora, some of whom are themselves UWI graduates, will be a good target for the marketing of programmes.

This is a major opportunity as it is shown that globalisation, instead of destroying cultural identity has actually been responsible for a reassertion of national and regional cultural identities (Tomlinson, 2003; Bhagwati, 2004). Held and McGrew (2003) summarise the rise of regionalism in the global economy as follows: "Regionalism has not been a barrier to contemporary political globalisation... but on the contrary has been largely compatible with it." (p.12)

The Open Campus can then capitalise on this resurgence of cultural identity taking place in the Diaspora particularly in North America and Europe, by offering programmes by distance mode that will be attractive to that market. The Open Campus has the opportunity to promote programmes in the areas of cultural studies, eco-tourism, environmental studies and disaster management which have become key areas of interest in and on the Caribbean. In this regard, the Open Campus can capitalise on the GATS which will enable it to access the markets of the OECD and other countries.

In addition, the Open Campus can make available such programmes to students outside of the Diaspora who may also be interested in Caribbean Studies.

THE OPEN CAMPUS AND THE REVENUE STREAM FROM DISTANCE AND ON-LINE PROVISIONS

Another major benefit of the Open Campus is its potential to break away from the traditional financial model applied to higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean that has limited the UWI's access to funding. As the UWI main campuses are funded by the governments of the region, the funding formula is tied to the number of FTE (full time equivalents) that each of the traditional campuses have. The reliance of the University on the governments to fund the budgets each year does not allow for the security of the University and poses a constant risk to the sustainability of its programmes. "In order for the Open Campus to be sustainable it must adopt a business model which will rely on full cost recovery for its programmes. (UWI Strategic Plan, 2007-2012, p. 40).

Through the disaggregating of fees in a modular programme structure, the Open Campus has the potential to increase revenue while ensuring that the student is able to choose an affordable menu of courses. This is in apposition to the traditional on-campus programmes where students pay for courses on a semester basis and are required to take a minimum number of credits to remain enrolled.

In addition, the current policies of the World Bank and UNESCO and other funding agencies embrace the move towards the development of virtual universities in developing countries as a cost effective and efficient way of providing higher education. (Light, 1999; Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta, 2007). Thus funding the enterprise through grants and soft loans provided by these agencies is a bright prospect for the injection of the capital needed to develop the Open Campus' technological infrastructure.

THE RISKS FACING THE OPEN CAMPUS

As with any new venture there are tremendous risks facing the Open Campus of the UWI as it moves into the full scale provision of higher education through e-learning models.

The risks can be classified as:

1. technological
2. financial
3. academic (Quality Assurance)

TECHNOLOGICAL RISKS

The success of any virtual enterprise is heavily dependent on the technological capabilities of the organisation as well as of its stakeholders. In this regard, the relatively low levels of internet penetration in the countries of the Caribbean present a major challenge to the Open Campus. Internet penetration statistics for November 2007 show total internet penetration in Latin America and the Caribbean at only 22% of population and in the Caribbean, a penetration of only 15% ²

TABLE 4: INTERNET PENETRATION
IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN

CARIBBEAN	Population (2007 Est.)	Internet Usage, Latest Data	% Population (Penetration)	Use Growth (2000-2007)
Anguilla	13487	3,000	22.2%	226.4%
Antigua & Barbuda	72,377	29,000	40.1%	480.0%
Bahamas	335,142	103,000	30.7%	686.3%
Barbados	267,353	160,000	59.8%	2,566.7%
Belize	312,233	38,000	12.2%	153.3%
British Virgin Islands	22,434	4,000	17.8%	n/a
Cayman Islands	50,348	9,909	19.7%	27.0%
Dominica	71,388	26,000	36.4%	1,200.0%
Grenada	101,008	19,000	18.8%	363.4%
Jamaica	2,710,063	1,067,000	39.4%	1,678.3%
Montserrat	4,796	n/a	n/a	n/a
St. Kitts and Nevis	39,382	10,000	25.4%	400%
St. Lucia	169,576	55,000	32.4%	1733.3%
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	125,882	10,000	7.9%	185.7%
Trinidad and Tobago	1,330,164	160,000	12%	60.0%

Extracted from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats2.htm>

The table shows a wide distribution of internet penetration rates in the countries which are the main targets of the Open Campus – from a low of 7.9 percent in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to a high of 59 percent in Barbados. It is clear that the reliance on distance and on-line modalities could create a technological divide within the region and may leave those countries with low access out of the “space of flows” (Marginson and Sawir, 2005).

² <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm> accessed January 27, 2008, 9:30 p.m (EST)

However these figures also indicate that the growth in internet access in the Anglophone Caribbean has been over 900 percent on average between 2000-2007. This suggests an increasingly competitive and growing market for the Open Campus.

The leaders of the Open Campus need to pay specific attention to those countries with low penetration rates and relatively low growth such as St. Vincent and the Grenadines and devise strategies in collaboration with the governments and telecommunications providers. Such strategies will ensure the inclusion of these countries in the growth of on-line delivery.

FINANCIAL RISKS

Much of the success of the Open Campus is predicated on the possibility of the on-line model to be more cost effective than the traditional face-to-face model. There is much scepticism of the claim that the on-line distance mode has proven to be more cost effective. Newman and Johnson (1999) in their study of 12 developers of on-line education in Northern Ireland conclude that the administration of the technology will require highly paid personnel to “mind the technology” (p.85), thus leading to high costs.

This is particularly risky for the Caribbean where access to trained human resources to manage the technology is limited. The Open Campus is faced with the potential of having to import persons at a high cost with the technological skills necessary to maintain the system due to a lack of a domestic pool of human resources. However, the Open Campus can also provide the Caribbean with a pool of technologically capable personnel through the knowledge exchange from internal and external collaborative relationships.

The second issue is the high cost of hardware and software in the region which will affect both the administration of the Open Campus and the target market that for the most part does not have easy access to personal computers. This challenges the Open Campus to work in building relationships with organisations in the educational sector (colleges, high schools) with access to computers to make these available in off use times to students of the Open Campus.

ACADEMIC RISK

The true value of on-line education is often questioned by scholars of teaching and learning. In some cases the on-line model is seen as an inferior tool that provides information but does not adequately transfer knowledge (Marginson and Sawir, 2005, p. 83). In addition, the lack of contact between tutor and student and the pre-packaging of information in a con-

sumerist form could “eclipse the social and cultural objectives of higher education generally encompassed in the conception of higher education as a ‘public good’” (Naidoo 2003, p.250).

Further, the risk to the University’s reputation is that the offering of its programmes in on-line mode through the Open Campus is an opportunity for the state institution to produce low cost and consequently lower quality teaching. (Naidoo, 2007). In somewhat hyperbolic terms Newman and Johnson (1999) characterize this risk as follows “The decomposition of knowledge into packages of information [displays an] affinity with post modernistic characteristics of fragmentation, relativism and individual indulgence.” (p.87)

The matter of quality assurance therefore is of tremendous importance in the development of the Open Campus. In the responses to the survey of senior managers and administrators of the UWI this was one element that was agreed on by a majority of respondents. Respondents suggested that if the Open Campus does not produce recognizably high academic quality and student experience, then the damage to the University’s reputation as a whole could be irreparable.

The fact that all its programmes will be subject to similar quality assurance guidelines as are applied to the traditional campuses is a heartening one. However, the danger does exist that in the rush towards responsiveness to market forces, the Open Campus could attempt to shortcut the traditional processes of course and programme development. The Campus therefore needs to implement checks and balances at all stages of the development and delivery of on line programmes to ensure a strict adherence to the UWI standards of excellence and that the output of the Campus “measures up as they enter the workforce” (Stallings, 2002, p. 50)

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the forces of globalisation in the socio-political and economic realm are now bearing down rapidly on the Higher Education Sector internationally. In the drafting of the GATS many countries, particularly in the developing countries and, as indicated by Beckles (2004), the Anglophone Caribbean, did not recognize the enormity of the effect of the liberalisation of services in Higher Education. Although there has been some hiatus in working out the details of the GATS, its effect on higher education continues to snowball in the developing world with a proliferation of extra-regional institutions entering these markets.

The original concept of the Open Campus was a narrower one responding to the local and regional needs of providing increased

access to our populations to the offerings of the UWI. However, on examination of the issues which are raised by the opportunities and the risks facing the Open Campus, it is clear that its potential is much greater than was originally anticipated in its conceptualisation. The research done on other developing countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean exposes both the potential gains and losses for the UWI's venture into a virtual environment. The virtual university in the developing world has not been fully tested and so the Open Campus' foray into this mode of delivery is a risky one. However as is often said in the field of business, a high risk can have a high yield.

In the planning and execution of the Open Campus, therefore, serious attention needs to be paid to the level of preparedness in the region for this mode 1 delivery. If the Open Campus is to fulfill the mandate of increasing mass education at the tertiary level, then it will have to use a creative combination of partnerships with governments and other institutions to develop technological infrastructure in its target countries. In addition, it will have to embrace a business model that will seek to diversify its revenue base from within the Anglophone Caribbean and reaching out to the Diaspora and beyond.

The core of the success of the Open Campus lies in providing a cost effective, high quality and positive learning experience and environment for students. There are often repeated stories of disillusionment of students, governments, and communities in the Caribbean with the impact of the University on the region, particularly in the smaller countries without campuses. The affirmation therefore of one senior manager that we are in a time of "redress" needs to be taken very seriously. Adequate funding for the initiation of the Open Campus needs to be put in place to ensure that the project is successfully launched. Full self sustainability of this new venture is unlikely to be realised within the first three years of its launch, thus the UWI will have to find a combination of sources of funding to ensure the success of the venture.

Finally, with the launch of the Open Campus, the UWI is thrusting itself into a highly competitive market which includes very aggressive players with global experience. The Anglophone Caribbean is attractive to these players, primarily in the areas of professional development and training. The Open Campus will have to adopt a style of marketing and promotion which is alien to the traditional UWI mode of operation. The challenge for academics and administrators alike is to ensure that the Open Campus has enough flexibility and freedom from the traditional bureaucratic decision making structures inherent to universities, while still maintaining an organic link with the acknowledged high quality academic and research base of the University and its Faculties. The latter will feed into the developments of the Open Campus and ensure that the high quality learning experience that will make the Open Campus and the UWI competitive is realised.

The University of the West Indies has a history and proven track record of innovation in its outreach sector. The Open Campus has the opportunity to reshape the face of regional higher education, and to enter the competitive world of borderless higher education in an aggressive rather than defensive mode.

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