



Annual Report

2025-26

| Produced by the Public Relations & Publications Committee
| Compiled by Donnette Wright, General Secretary
| WIGUT (JAMAICA), New Arts Block, Ground Floor | Faculty of Humanities & Education
| Email: wigut@uwimona.edu.jm
| Website: <http://wigut.uwimona.edu.jm>

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State of the Union Address

Friends, colleagues, workers, greetings on the occasion of the annual general meeting of the West Indies Group of University Teachers (WIGUT) Jamaica. It was just about 6 months ago that I addressed you at our last Annual General Meeting. Then, we highlighted the need to enhance advocacy for better compensation, to expand potential professional development opportunities, to press the University to improve working conditions, to boost financial and legal support, and to leverage technology and innovation.

Through the work of our Negotiations Committee, leading the charge, with the support of the Management and Executive Committees, we have been following up on our commitment to complete this process in the shortest possible time. So far, we have had one meeting with the University management and should be meeting with the TIU and Ministry of Finance personnel in short order. Notwithstanding, the details that are included in the Negotiations Committee's report underscore the complexity of operations within the industrial relations landscape, as we deal with the multiplicity of issues surrounding our operations.

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And those do not address the other matters surrounding the staff in The Bahamas, for example, for whom the matter of representation is still outstanding, since we learnt that the Union of Tertiary Educators of The Bahamas (UTEB) had secured bargaining rights for all staff at the School of Clinical Medicine and Research. In that regard, we are in the process of negotiating a collaboration/affiliation agreement with UTEB to ensure continuity of representation in line with colleagues at Mona. Further, through the work of the Management Committee, we drafted a constitution for the staff at the Five Islands Campus and are pleased to announce the formation and registration of the newest WIGUT: WIGUT (Antigua and Barbuda). In both cases, we learned officially that a non-resident Union cannot directly represent and bargain for workers in those countries.

Regarding the financial and legal framework, we continue to have discussions with the former and current University General Counsel (UGC) regarding the expanded role of the Visitor, and to have an alternative dispute resolution framework, given the increasing complexity of matters that we are presented with for resolution. The other aspects of concern are still in the works as we seek creative solutions to fill those gaps.

So far, I can report that the jurisdiction and powers of the Visitor are to be revisited, with a view to restoring a broader role consistent with the traditional authority of the Visitor under Article 6 of the Royal Charter prior to the 2018 amendments, including powers extending beyond a mere administrative review function, and perhaps, equally important, that the period for appeals by staff and students should be extended to at least six months to give aggrieved staff and students more time to complete the process of finalizing any cases to be brought to the Visitor. Further, while all of this centres around the indigenization of The UWI, that is, to be a creature of CARICOM rather than of Royal Charter, the formation of and access to The Caribbean Court of Justice Appellate Tribunal (CCAT), would allow for additional options for the resolution of industrial relations matters involving staff. This would not affect options available via the grievance procedure at the local level, i.e., within The UWI, which, in Jamaica, could be advanced to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Industrial Disputes Tribunal.

The Union is acutely aware of the other challenges facing members across the business units of the University, in particular, the Centre and Global Campus, and no effort is being spared to ensure that all these matters are resolved. As you know, these matters include:

1. **Timely payment of Study and Travel grants and Book grants**, as well as other breaches of the collective labour agreements;
2. **Registration of the FSSU scheme within the region.** Since the Mona Campus' last town hall meeting, nothing much has been said about this, and we are awaiting word from the University about the state of play, given that several extensions were obtained, as well as the apparent need to redraft the Trust Deed and Rules.
3. **Representation of Adjunct staff**, whether in Jamaica, the Bahamas, or the UWI12+2. We previously indicated that an aspect of research that was needed was to determine what are the various labour laws within the UWIVERSE. Consequently, as a Union, we need to determine how we can better serve persons who have these types of contracts.

As I close this brief report, I would like to remind members of our collective responsibilities:

1. **We will speak with one voice** and thus maintain the strength that a Union represents. While we cannot prevent members from speaking out on particular issues, whether at College Common, at UWISON, or at the RHQ, collectively, in most instances, there is strength in unity.
2. **We will remain vigilant and respond appropriately to all challenges that are posed by the Mona Campus, the Centre or the Global Campus**, whether these are unilateral positions being proposed, or attempts to introduce new measures for reviewing Sabbatical Leave rules.
3. **We will stand together regarding the current discussions and negotiations regarding the Compensation Review** and resist any attempt to decouple, delink or otherwise separate staff categories within the bargaining unit.
4. **We will ensure that we finalize the items for the upcoming proposals for 2026-2029 triennium.**

Finally, as always, we could not have accomplished any of the achievements without your involvement, as well as those of the Executive and Management Committees, and all of the special secretaries and representatives at the various levels, the office staff, the negotiating team, who work more closely with me as President. It has been an honour to serve you in this capacity, and as always, together we look forward to what is ahead.

Thank you.

Professor Paul D. Brown, JP

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

WIGUT (Jamaica)

General Secretary's Report 2025–2026

Introduction

The 2025–2026 reporting period was characterized by both national and institutional challenges that tested our resilience and reaffirmed the enduring values of patriotism, solidarity, adaptability and fortitude that continue to define our Union and nation.

It is with humility and gratitude that I present my inaugural report as General Secretary of WIGUT (Jamaica). This report highlights the Union's principal activities, achievements and areas of engagement during the reporting period, while underscoring our continued commitment to advocacy, representation and member support.

WIGUT (JAMAICA) COMMITTEES

Membership Support

During the 2025–2026 period, the Union continued to experience steady growth in membership. Registered membership increased by 6% (49 members), bringing total membership to 910. This sustained growth reflects members' confidence in the Union's representation, advocacy and activism on their behalf.

The University's orientation exercise for new staff members was held on September 30, 2025. WIGUT (Jamaica) was represented by the Industrial Relations Officer, Mr. Gavin Walters, who delivered a presentation outlining the mandate of the Union and the benefits of membership.

Training and leadership initiatives throughout the year focused on strengthening essential academic and professional competencies and empowering members to enhance their professional development. These initiatives were spearheaded by the Professional Development Committee, which collaborated with senior administrative staff and academics in workshop settings aimed at strengthening leadership and professional skillsets.

WIGUT (Jamaica) collaborated with the Office of the Campus Registrar to host a Sexual Harassment Sensitization Session on February 26, 2026.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Public Relations and Publications Committee

The Public Relations and Publications (PRP) Committee continued to use innovative and engaging communication strategies to keep members informed about Union activities and benefits. Several editions of *FlashNews* were published during the reporting period featuring:

- President's Welcome Message
- Introduction of the Executive
- Valentine's Day Greetings
- Special Leave Types
- Study and Travel Grant information

In recognition and appreciation of members, the PRP Committee also designed and distributed commemorative flyers observing:

- Reggae Month and Black History Month
- International Women's Day
- Mothers' Day
- Teachers' Day

WIGUT Website and Digital Presence

The Union continued efforts to update and maintain its website through content management and digital support initiatives undertaken by the PRP Committee. While several challenges limited the full realization of the Committee's objectives during the reporting period, strategies are being implemented to address these issues during the upcoming administrative year.

The Union also maintained an active social media presence, with particular emphasis on the Facebook platform. Plans are underway to further develop a more dynamic and interactive digital engagement strategy in future administrations.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development Committee organized a workshop/seminar for its members, along with selected members of the Executive, to orient them to key documents such as the Ordinances, Career Path framework, Blue Book, and other relevant resources that are essential to members' career growth and development. This session was designed as part of succession planning, awareness building, and training the trainers, ensuring that the WIGUT (Jamaica) has a pool of qualified individuals who can support members effectively.

The second initiative was a collaborative effort with the Employee Success Division during their annual appraisal and assessment session. This platform was used to educate Academic, Senior Administrative and Professional (ASAP) staff on several important topics, including CV preparation, understanding the assessment process, and navigating the promotion cycle. Additionally, two WIGUT members delivered presentations on predatory journals and predatory conferences. This initiative was held in April 2026.

Pension Committee

The Pension Committee remained actively engaged throughout the 2025/2026 academic year, hosting several meetings and educational sessions geared toward enhancing members' understanding of pension and retirement planning matters. The Committee hosted:

- 2 Pension Committee Meetings
- 4 Planning Committee Meetings

Pension Fund Relocation Sensitization Session

On Thursday, March 19, 2026, the Committee hosted a Pension Fund Relocation Sensitization Session for members. The session was well received, providing members with the opportunity to ask questions and gain clarity regarding the pension fund relocation process and related matters.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Pension Seminar 2026

The Committee successfully hosted its annual Pension Seminar on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at the Regional Headquarters. The seminar was well attended and positively received by members. The seminar featured several informative presentations from internal and external presenters, including:

- Ms. Nolda Thompson, Senior Assistant Registrar, Employee Success Department “Navigating Retirement Transition: HR Guidelines and Essential Procedures”
- Ms. Simone Brown, Manager, Compensation & Benefits, Bursary “Unlocking Your Pension: Exploring Payment Options and Required Documentation”
- Ms. Magdalena Cooper-de Neuze, LUTCF, CLU, Ch.F.C. “Estate Planning – Will it or Trust it?”
- Jamaica Money Market Brokers (JMMB) “Common Financial Pitfalls and Effective Investment Strategies”
- Sagicor Bank “Current Market Trends and the Economic Outlook”
- Dr. Julian McKoy Davis, Senior Lecturer, FMS – Mona Ageing and Wellness “Healthy Ageing: Reducing the Cost of Retirement Through Preventative Care”

The Committee will conclude the semester with a final session aimed at assisting members in navigating the Hartlink platform, which will serve as both a refresher for current members and an orientation session for new members.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Grievance Committee

The full Grievance Committee met once during the 2025–2026 academic year, and the Committee convened three meetings during the reporting period. The Committee remained highly active in addressing matters affecting members and filed several cases with University Management and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS).

Under the stewardship of the Grievance Secretary, Ms. Myrna Douglas, and with support from the immediate past Chair, Mr. Kurt Vaz, the Committee addressed several complaints received from members across the Mona (including Centre) and Global campuses. These matters included:

- Non-payment of Study and Travel and Book Grants
- Living condition concerns
- Unprofessional conduct by supervisors
- Breaches of contract
- Interpersonal conflicts among staff members
- Inequities in the application of rules governing tuition exemption for non-UGC funded programmes

Most of these complaints were resolved satisfactorily; however, some matters remained under investigation at the time this report was prepared.

Collective Grievances

During the reporting period, WIGUT (Jamaica) filed two collective grievances against The University of the West Indies, while four matters were submitted to the Union for consideration as individual grievances.

The collective grievances related primarily to breaches of Clause 8 of the 2023–2026 Collective Bargaining Agreement concerning the payment of Book Grants and Study and Travel Grants. The grievance procedures outlined in the Rules for Academics, Senior Administrative and Professional Staff (the “Blue Book”) were activated. One matter was satisfactorily resolved, while the second remains active.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Additionally, two legacy matters from the previous reporting period remain unresolved:

- A breach of Clause 2 of the 2023–2026 Collective Bargaining Agreement regarding staff incentives for Professors at the top of the salary scale. This matter is currently before the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for conciliation.
- A dispute between WIGUT (Jamaica) and The University of the West Indies, Mona, concerning health and pension benefit contributions. This matter also remains before the Ministry for resolution.

At the time this report was prepared, all four individual grievances remained active and were at varying stages of the grievance process.

Negotiations and Collective Bargaining Committee

The mandate of the Negotiations Committee remains the negotiation of terms and conditions of service, including compensation and related emoluments, on behalf of Union members.

The Committee convened twenty-three (23) weekly meetings between August 2025 and the present reporting period. The Committee played an integral role in overseeing the Ernst & Young (EY) Compensation Review (2025).

Following completion of the EY report and concerns regarding aspects of its content, the Committee developed a Corrective Review which was submitted to University Management and the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MOFPS). This review articulated the Union's position regarding appropriate compensation adjustments and provided supporting evidence for the Union's recommendations.

Under the leadership of Lead Negotiator, Professor Hubert Devonish, the Committee has continued to actively represent the interests of members in ongoing compensation review discussions. To date, the Committee has participated in three meetings with University Management to initiate negotiations relating to compensation review.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Since the last AGM, the Committee has accomplished the following:

Key Accomplishments

- Supported WIGUT (Jamaica) representatives serving on the University-convened Compensation Review Steering Committee; contributed to the Union's Corrective Review of the EY compensation recommendations; and established the Union's position regarding appropriate compensation increases.
- Led the Union's response to the University's proposal to reduce health and retirement benefits for staff joining the University on or after August 1, 2025, and represented the Union during conciliation meetings at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.
- Supported the Executive and Grievance Committees in safeguarding the implementation of current and past collective bargaining agreements through:
 - Drafting the grievance claim related to the University's violation of Clause 2 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
 - Drafting correspondence concerning the delayed reimbursement of approved Study and Travel Grant expenses advanced by members, which resulted in an initial meeting and a commitment from the University to address the matter.

Compensation Review Update

At the time of writing this report, a meeting with the Transformation Implementation Unit (TIU) is scheduled for June 1, 2026.

Solidarity Newsletter

The Negotiations Committee published the *Solidarity* newsletter at pivotal periods throughout the year. Four issues were published between September 2025 and the present reporting period. The publication continues to play an important role in ensuring that members remain informed, connected, and prepared to support collective Union initiatives.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Welfare Fund Sub-committee

In the wake of Hurricane Melissa, the sub-committee met to consider applications from members for awards from the Fund in keeping with the criteria set out for making such awards. Five awards were made. In cases where it was not possible to offer assistance, the sub-committee made recommendations to approach the National Housing Trust and/or the Mona Campus, where possible.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

Joint Occupational Safety and Health (JOSH) Committee

Medical and Chemical Waste on the Campus: The proposal for temporary storage of medical and chemical waste on campus was submitted to Mona F&GPC late 2025 and the Committee awaits feedback.

Mary J Seivwright building: The major roof repair still remains undone. The Committee still awaits an update on the Purchase Order and start date for the repairs. This is a protracted issue and needs urgent attention as we approach the annual Atlantic hurricane season which starts June 01.

Safety Inspections and Indoor Air Quality Assessments: Walk through inspections and Indoor Air Quality Assessments were conducted at several sites across the campus. Significantly, the Data Protection Office situated at the Regional Headquarters (RHQ) was subjected to assessments due to persistent environmental issues including, but not limited to, water intrusion and high moisture levels. Remediation efforts have been implemented and are ongoing. Additional actions are needed but these are challenged by financial constraints. This matter remains on the Committee's agenda for further update.

Animals on Campus Policy: The Committee has commenced a draft policy on animals on the Mona campus. The reviewed document will be recirculated to the Committee for further discussion following consultation with a technical team from the relevant Ministry.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Sabbatical Leave Committee

The Sabbatical Leave Committee (SLC), comprising representatives from both WIGUT (Jamaica) and University Management, along with the Senior Assistant Registrar (HR) for Centre staff serving as a resource person, met between January and May 2026. One of the Union's two representatives was newly appointed and received training to effectively serve on the Committee.

During the reporting period, delays were experienced in accessing the Sabbatical Leave portal due to ongoing efforts to improve the portal's user interface and functionality. University Management formally advised the Union of a one-month delay in access. Subsequently, the Union received and circulated details regarding the expected modifications, including changes to portal navigation.

In keeping with established procedures, the Committee first confirmed the balance of funds in the Sabbatical pool and received assurances that funding would be available for staff replacement in accordance with the 2023–2026 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Applications Reviewed

Across three meeting dates, the SLC considered fifty (50) applications for sabbatical leave tenable during the 2026–2027 academic year. Of these applications:

- Forty-one (41) originated from Mona;
- Nine (9) originated from the Centre;
- Three (3) applications were ranked at the highest level of priority.

WIGUT representatives raised concerns regarding proposed changes to the selection criteria and emphasized the importance of consultation with the Union prior to implementation. Applications were subsequently advanced for approval by the Campus Appointments Committee (CAC). At the time this report was prepared, no final decision had been communicated.

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Security Committee

Over the period November 2025 to May 2026, five meetings of this Committee were held. The decisions/ actions covered that relate to staff were as follows:

1. Proposed Redesign of the Queens Way, Post Office and Irvine Gates and the Erection of New Guard Houses for the Welfare of the Guards. The work is expected to commence in 2028 and will involve both The UWI and the National Works Agency (NWA).
2. Amendments to update the Campus Security Act. Work is in progress; the Campus Legal Office is working with the Faculty of Law on the document.
3. Protocol regarding the Staging of Events on the Campus and Noise Control Protocol. The draft guidelines were recirculated to members of the Security Committee and revised based on their suggestions. The final draft has been submitted to the Campus Registrar and the Committee is awaiting feedback.
4. Development of a Training Manual for Security Guards on the Mona Campus. The Campus Security Manager was tasked with developing a training manual for security guards. The manual was completed and was circulated to members in January 2026.
5. Project to update the Access Control Systems on the Campus. This project is nearing completion. However, a few locations could not be configured and activated without needed repairs being completed.
6. Request for the Relocation of an Access Control System from one section of the Main Library to the Library's Mailing Room. The request for the relocation of the access control system in the Main Library is contingent on the Access Control Project reported above.
7. Sub-Committee to Discuss the Drafting of Security Advisories to the Campus Community. Work on the security advisories is in progress. At the meeting held on January 21, 2026, the Committee heard that the Campus Legal Officer was assembling a Sub-Committee to review the matter. There were no further updates.
8. Lighting needed at the Main Car Park, along the Rex Spine, and the Pathway to the Students' Union. Progress on this was affected by budgetary constraints. Procurement of the lighting materials to execute the work is being awaited.

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9. Placement of Lights at the Faculty of Science and Technology. The issue of lighting at the Department of Life Sciences was raised at several meetings. At the April 2026 meeting, the Campus Security Manager agreed to conduct checks in the area.
10. Parking Challenges at the Sir Allister McIntyre Building Parking Lot. Efforts were being made by the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) to fill the post of Car Park Attendant.
11. Proposal to Establish an arrangement between the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) and the Mona Campus regarding Ambulance Services. The Committee noted that discussions had taken place with the relevant officers, and it was agreed to develop an appropriate protocol which would be shared with the Campus community. The protocol was expected to be ready for the May 2026 sitting of the Security Committee.
12. Verification of the Ambulance Service arrangement with the Campus Health Insurers. The Chief Emergency Management Officer was sourcing an ambulance. Also, the Director of the Office of Student Services and Development (OSSD) advised that a vehicle was being sought for retrofitting for use as an ambulance under the UWI Student Emergency Response Team (UWISERT). Concerns were raised about the fees charged by UWISERT for its service.
13. Need for Enhanced Lighting at the Bus Stop Located in Front of the Regional Headquarters. Concerns were raised about the lighting at the bus stop in front of the Regional Headquarters area and the potential security risk to students. An email was sent to the Kingston & St Andrew Municipal Corporation (KSAMC) on the matter. Other concerns were raised regarding lighting along the road from the Aqueduct Mona Road to the Queens Way gate.
14. Request for the Erection of a Drop Bar and Guard Hut at the Main Library Car Park. A drop bar similar to the one at the entrance of the Faculty of Humanities and Education would be a practical solution because the parking lot was targeted by unauthorized persons due to its proximity to KFC and other businesses in the area.
15. Request for the Installation of Additional Cameras at the Main Library. Areas that were identified for coverage included the Reading Room, the basement of the Science and Engineering Branch Library (SEBL) and the parking lots.
16. Suggestion to establish a Security Club. An update on this matter would be given at the commencement of the new academic year.

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17. Update on Security Measures. During the review period, the Campus Security Manager provided updates at meeting. The following are highlights:
- a. The security technological project was underway; License Plate Reader (LPR) cameras were installed at the gates and were being utilized.
 - b. There was sign-off on the purchase of servers for the Monitoring Station.
 - c. The Campus Police Unit had acquired a new motor vehicle. Other vehicles in the fleet were old but were still being used.
 - d. The Campus Police Unit was expanded from 12 to 18 officers.
 - e. The Mona Campus Police and the Jamaica Constabulary Force continued to work collaboratively in maintaining security on the Campus. The Campus Security Manager was in dialogue with the Estate Management Department to have the Mona Police Post, the King Alarm Base and the guard houses repaired in the next budget cycle.
18. Security of the College Common Community. The Committee noted that greater attention should be paid to the security at College Commons. Also, concerns were raised about the “one gate” policy and the security risk that this posed. At the May 20, 2026 meeting, members noted that a key for the east gate was left at the guard house at the west gate. The key would be used to open the east gate as needed.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Housing Committee

The UWI Housing Committee continued to monitor staff housing demand, housing allocations, vacant housing stock, and progress under the College Common Renovation Project – Phase 2.

1. **Staff Members Awaiting Housing**

- At March 2026, there were 46 staff members awaiting housing; of this number, there were 27 applications for two-room housing.

2. **Housing Allocations**

- A total of fourteen staff members were housed during the reporting period. Applicants housed were those eligible for three-room and four-room units.

3. **Vacant Housing Stock**

- The number of vacant houses declined from 23 in October 2025 to 19 in November 2025 and remained at that level in January 2026, before decreasing further to 14 in March 2026. This reflected the continued occupancy of available housing units.

4. **Complaints by Residents**

- Frequent complaints by residents included:
 - The overgrowth and general maintenance of College Common;
 - The issue of rat infestation that had arisen in College Common due to the debris accumulated; and
 - Noise from parties held on the Campus.
- The Committee heard that the breakdown in proper maintenance of College Common was due largely to the current financial situation of The UWI.

5. **College Common Renovation Project – Phase 2**

- The Committee received regular updates on the renovation programme and heard that several units were at medium to advanced stages of completion. Completion of Phase 2 is projected for the end of June 2026.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

WIGUT Office

The Union celebrated Ms. Frances Richards for her twenty years of dedicated service to WIGUT (Jamaica). She was formally recognized during an Executive Meeting held in February 2026.

A new staff member, Ms. Toni-Ann Clarke, joined the Secretariat and served from February 2, 2026, to May 1, 2026.

Mr. Gavin Walters continues to serve the Union as Industrial Relations Officer, while Ms. Frances Richards continues in her role as Administrative Officer. Mr. Nathan Williams also provided bearer support services during the reporting period.

Renovation of the WIGUT office commenced during the year, including the management and archiving of files under the leadership of Vice President Dunstan Newman. This initiative is expected to continue into the next administrative period.

Forecasting: Priorities for the Coming Year

As the Union moves forward into the next administrative year, the following are priority areas:

1. Securing wage improvements to address inflationary pressures and the increasing cost of living.
2. Strengthening organizational capacity by ensuring that every department and section has active Union representation.
3. Expanding welfare and mental health support services for members.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Conclusion

To every member of WIGUT (Jamaica), I extend sincere gratitude for the confidence you have reposed in me during my inaugural tenure as General Secretary.

I express special appreciation to Dr. McKenzie (“Dr. Mac”), whose guidance and mentorship provided an invaluable foundation for undertaking the responsibilities of this office. I also wish to acknowledge Ms. Frances Richards, whose steadfast support and institutional knowledge have been indispensable throughout this period.

To the general membership, your dedication within the lecture theatres, administrative offices and professional spaces, coupled with your unwavering solidarity within the Union, remains the cornerstone of our success.

This report would not be complete without acknowledging the tireless contributions of the Executive and Management Committees. Special commendation must also be extended to the full-time staff of the WIGUT Secretariat, whose professionalism and commitment ensured the efficient daily operations of the Union.

In particular, I express profound appreciation to Ms. Frances Richards and Mr. Gavin Walters, consummate professionals whose dedication to service significantly strengthened the work of the General Secretary’s office.

Thank you.

Prepared by:
Dr. Donnette Wright, JP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WIGUT (Jamaica) acknowledges the contributions of all who work tirelessly on its behalf.

- Office managers & coordinators
- Volunteer committee members
- Website & social media designers
- Writers, proofreaders, & graphic designers
- Colleagues from local, regional, and partner organizations
- Members, contributors, and donors

We thank you for your continued support!

CONTACT

WIGUT (Jamaica)

New Arts Block, Ground Flr.
Faculty of Humanities &
Education

www.wigut.uwimona.edu.jm
mona-wigut@uwi.edu

876-970-4596