



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

EBook EBOOK

Produced by the Public Relations & Publications Committee

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WEST INDIES GROUP OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS (Jamaica)
REG. T.U. No. 113

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF WIGUT (JAMAICA)
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2024 AT 12:00 NOON
IN THE REX NETTLEFORD MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM AND VIA ZOOM**

Call to Order, Welcome, and Apologies for Absence

1. The General Secretary and Chairperson, Ms. Anthia Muirhead, after confirming that the requisite quorum was present, called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone.
2. Apologies for absence were tendered on behalf of Mrs. Elizabeth McGregor, Dr. Anna Perkins, Ms. Sandra Minott, Dr. Frederick Boyd, Dr. Deon Soares, Professor Silvia Kouwenberg, Mrs. Michelle Stewart-McKoy, Dr. Nicki Chin and Mr. Shavon Hutchinson.

Adoption of the Agenda

3. The agenda was adopted as presented on a motion by Professor Garth Lipps and seconded by Dr. Ann-Marie Williams.

Confirmation of Minutes

4. The Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting, held on May 31, 2023 were confirmed by Professor Garth Lipps and seconded by Dr. Venkateswara Penugonda without amendment.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

5. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

President's Report

6. The President, Professor Paul Brown, presented his report which covered highlights of his stewardship during the reporting period.
7. The Chair invited questions and/or comments from the members on the President's Report. There being none, the Chair thanked the President for his presentation.
8. WIGUT (Jamaica) accepted the report as presented.

General Secretary's Report

9. The Chair presented a comprehensive report highlighting the work of both WIGUT and University Committees on which members served.
10. She invited questions and/or comments from the members on the General Secretary's Report. There being none, the meeting accepted the report as presented.

Treasurer's Report

11. The Chair apologized for the absence of the Treasurer's Report, and noted that it would be circulated as soon as it is received. She invited the Assistant Treasurer, Ms. Merlyn Reid, to present the report on behalf of the Treasurer.

Financial Report

12. Ms. Reid indicated that she would be presenting an overview of the 2023 accounts as the Audited Financial Statements were received late.
13. The Union had grown significantly over the past 66 years, moving from 25 members in 1958 to approximately 900 members presently. Membership dues were the primary driver of the Union's financial activities.
14. For the year under review, revenues totaled \$98M, earned primarily from subscriptions, dividends, and interest income. This was a 3% increase over last year's figure. Operating expenses totaled \$37.97M which was a 14% increase over the \$33.22M in the previous period. Routine expenses were carefully managed and kept below prior levels where possible. There were, however, other expenses during the year which increased the spend. These included the Christmas Party and overseas travel expenses with the return of in-person Career Path and Blue Book meetings. Operating surplus totaled approximately \$60M.
15. At the end of 2023, total assets under management were just over \$284M, an increase of \$59.44M over the year 2022. Funds under management are invested in money market and equity instruments. The Union remains adequately capitalised despite the challenges in the local and global economies.
16. Looking forward to the 2024-2025 period, the plan was to increase and diversify the investment portfolio as well as earn additional revenue through real estate.
17. The Chairperson invited questions and/or comments on the Treasurer's Report.
18. The President shared with the meeting that a significant part of the increase in expenditure was the Christmas Party and the additional requirement from the KSAMC for the Union to have on site a medical personnel in case of any medical emergencies and an ambulance on call.

Adoption of Reports

19. The Chairperson thanked the Assistant Treasurer for the presentation and made a motion for the adoption of the reports.
20. WIGUT (Jamaica) adopted the reports presented.

Appointment of Auditors

21. The Assistant Treasurer expressed dissatisfaction with the tardiness of the auditors, BDO, and sought support to use the tender process to appoint auditors for the next period. This was supported.

Update on Negotiations 2023-2026 Triennium

22. The Chairman invited the President to lead the meeting in the update of Negotiations for the 2023-2026 triennium. The President said the Secretary's report gave an almost full report on the status of negotiations; however, there was some sticking points in relation to Instructors. He said prior to the Union signing off on the claim items, a general meeting will be held with the members.

Adoption of Resolutions

23. The Chairperson reminded the members that a list of resolutions were circulated and were to be adopted at the Annual General Meeting. The resolutions would amend the Union's Constitution and By-laws and were previously supported by the Executive. The resolutions were as follows:
 - i. **Recognition of The UWI Global Campus.** With the rebranding of the Open Campus, all references included in the Constitution and by-laws be changed to The UWI Global Campus. This affects Articles 3.1, 7.1.11, 8.2.3 and 8.2.4.
 - ii. **Removal of reference to the Centre for Hotel and Tourism Management.** With the closure of the Centre for Hotel and Tourism Management in the Bahamas, all references to the Centre be removed. This affects Articles 3.4 and 7.1.12.
 - iii. **Change of quorum for AGM and General Meetings.** The quorum for the AGM and all General meetings be changed to 75. This affects Articles 6.1.3, 6.2.5, 6.3.3, 6.4.4.
 - iv. **Addition of Remuneration clause.** A Remuneration clause be added as **Article 15. Remuneration Clause** to read "Notwithstanding Article 13.2, the remuneration and benefits (if any) of the Directors shall be determined by the Executive Committee."
 - v. **Protocol for acceptance of motions.** The protocol for acceptance of motions at general meetings be set at a minimum of 55% of the members present at the meeting voting in favour of the motion(s). This will be designated as Appendix 3.
24. The Chairperson called for a motion on the resolutions en bloc, but the meeting agreed that each resolution should be taken separately. The President guided the process thereafter.
25. Responding to a query on Resolution #4, the President explained that it came about because a former Union President was contacted by the Tax Office seeking to ascertain if he had received remuneration from the Union. The President read the resolution and said if a decision is to be made regarding remuneration, then it would be decided by the Directors of the Union. The meeting expressed opposition to the statement and the wording of the resolution as it felt a decision on remuneration to Directors should be made by the wider

membership. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the resolution would be modified to indicate that a decision re remuneration would be determined by the membership at an Annual General Meeting.

26. A member sought clarification on Resolution #2 regarding the Centre for Hotel and Tourism Management (CHTM). The President explained that the matter of CHTM had to do with the closure of the facility, and not in relation to WIGUT's representation of the retirees of the facility.
27. The resolutions were put to a vote, and after the counts, the President read the results, which were as follows:

Results

Resolution #1 (95/117 for)	- Resolution carried
Resolution #2 (94/117 for; 1 abstained)	- Resolution carried
Resolution #3 (73/117 for; 8 abstained)	- Resolution carried
Resolution #4 (69/117 for)	- Resolution carried (with the understanding that the resolution will be reworded)
Resolution #5 (71 for; 4 against; 3 abstained)	- Resolution carried

Election of Executive Officers

28. The elections were presided over by Dr. Vivette Milson-Whyte, who outlined the procedures for the members.
29. The following persons were duly elected to serve for the year 2024/2025:

President	Professor Paul Brown
Vice President	Dr. Charmaine McKenzie
Vice President	Mr. Dunstan Newman
General Secretary	Ms. Anthia Muirhead
Assistant General Secretaries	Ms. Sandra Stubbs
	Ms. Audrey Saddler
Treasurer	Mrs. Shana Hastings Edwards
Assistant Treasurer	Ms. Merlyn Reid

Special Secretaries

Grievance	Mr. Kurt Vaz
Membership	Mr. Kirk Mullings
Pension	Mrs. Maxine Lettman-Hall
Professional Development	Mr. Dunstan Newman
Public Relations/Publications	Mrs. Audrey Ellis-Lettman
Research	Dr. Colette Cunningham-Myrie

Section Representatives

University Centre	Mr. Howard Smith
Senior Administrative	Mrs. Francesca Lloyd-McDavid
Humanities	Ms. Haidee Heron
Education	Dr. Ann-Marie Wilmot

Social Sciences	Dr. Charlette Donalds
Medical Sciences (Pre-clinical)	to be filled
Medical Sciences (Clinical)	to be filled
School of Nursing	Mrs. Sandra Chisholm-Ford
Library	to be filled
Professional Staff	to be filled
Global Campus (Jamaica)	to be filled
Faculty of Law	Mrs. Peta-Gaye McEwan-Lewis
Norman Manley Law School	Ms. Janett Levy
Science and Technology	Dr. Raymond Reid
MITS	Ms. Nicole McKenzie
Estate Management	to be filled
Institute of Gender Development & Studies	to be filled
Health Centre	to be filled
Faculty of Engineering	Mr. Da-Vaugh Sanderson
Faculty of Sports	Ms. Asenath Sharpe
Western Jamaica Campus	Mr. Anthony Drummonds
Heads of Centre (UWI 12 +2)	to be filled
Office of Student Services & Development	to be filled
School of Clinical Medicine/Research (SCMR)	to be filled
Retirees	Mr. Paul Payton

Co-opted Members

To be appointed

30. Dr. Milson-Whyte congratulated the incoming Executive and wished them well.
31. The President also congratulated the incoming members of the Executive, and thanked the meeting for the confidence in and continued support of the Executive.

Adjournment

32. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3:12 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Paul Payton. The motion was seconded by Professor Garth Lipps.

MEETING REGISTER
WIGUT (Jamaica)
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
May 29, 2024

Presiding Executives:

Anthia Muirhead	-	General Secretary and Chairperson
Paul Brown	-	President
Charmaine McKenzie	-	Vice President
Dunstan Newman	-	Vice President
Shana Hastings-Edwards	-	Treasurer
Merlyn Reid	-	Assistant Treasurer
Vivette Milson-Whyte	-	Election Officer

In Attendance:

Gavin Walters

Members:

Name	Name	Name
Bolapeju Agboola	Althea East-Innis	Michelle McLeod
Moji Anderson	Aldeam Facey	Nehanda Nkrumah
Patrick Anglin	Owen Ferguson	Rotimi Omosulu
Alexander Antoine	Therese Ferguson	Dr. Rakhee
Jessie Antwi-Cooper	Trevor Ferguson	Rohan Shaw
Tracy-Ann Beckford	Daniel Fokum	Kurt Vaz
Samuel Braithwaite	Sheryl Garriques-Lloyd	Mauvette Waite
Paul Brown	Monique Gayle	Christine Walters
Cerita Buchanan	Lois George	Deneal Walters
Annife Campbell	Kareen Guscott	Dadre White
Rudolph Carroll	Talisha Baker-Whilby	Sonja Williams
Leighton Chambers	Michelle Bruce	Ann-Marie Wilmot
Olivene Christie	Sandra Chisholm-Ford	Louis-Ray Harris
Keren Cumberbatch	Louri Clare	Shana Hastings Edwards
Suzette Cunningham	Julian Devonish	Kayann Henry
Colette Cunningham-Myrie	Myrna Douglas	Haidee Heron
Derval Dally	Dillon Doyle	Tameika James-Green
Janet DeSouza	Allison Dundas-Campbell	Sherene James-Williamson
Kelly-Ann Dixon Hamil	Locksley James	Ondrae Kennedy
Omar Downie	Jennifer Knight-Madden	Keresha Larmond
Deidrea Dwyer-Evans	Janett Levy	Jasmin Lawrence
Caroline Dyche	Garth Lipps	Claudia Lewis

Name	Name	Name
Nicole Lewis-Prawl	Enrique Okenve Martinez	Roxann Stennett-Brown
Dejon Lingo	Venkateswara Penugonda	Camille-Ann Thoms-Rodriguez
Francesca Lloyd-McDavid	Abiola Pereira Bertram	Michelle Tyndale
George McCaulsky	Paul Payton	Edward Wadsworth
Shelly McFarlane	Tenneil Rashford	Godfrey Walker
Charmaine McKenzie	Merlyn Reid	Melissa Walker
Nicole McKenzie	Tereza Richards	Maurice Saunders
Renae McKenzie	Walter Rodney	Thelma White
Faith McKoy-Johnson	Rasheen Roper-Robinson	Ann-Marie Williams
Cynthia Meggoe-Ebanks	Ann Marie Rose	Audra Williams
Willem Mulder	Audrey Saddler	Bernadette Worrell-Johnson
Heather Munro	Isis Semaj-Hall	Donnette Wright
Dunstan Newman	Heather Silvera	Michael Yee-Shui
Elaine Saunches	Carlene Simpson	Anthia Muirhead
Kedisha Williams	Sharon Smickle	Kasiane Reid Martin
Kirk Mullings	Dayna Smith	Michelle Bruce
Eulampia Polius-Springer	Sandra Stubbs	Audrey Ellis-Lettman
Annalisa Doctor	Claudia Halley	Alpha Obika
Beverly Burte	Emmogene Budhai-Alvaranga	Jody Grizzle
Kayon Dean	Marva Campbell	Julie Meeks
Ian Hayles	Renee Swaby-Frazer	André Graham
Elizabeth Sinclair	Krystle Stennett	Michelle Munroe
Marcia Ford	Stacy-Ann Meggo	Joseph Farquharson
Paul Reese	Soyinett Whyte	Sabrique Pinder-Butler
Maxine Lettman-Hall	Sophia Murray	Kay Brown
Jeremy Whyte	Jean Leslie	Christopher Muir
Sherika Danvers	Rudolph Carroll	Marlon Christie
Vernon Rowe	Janeil Brown	Yannick Lyn Fatt

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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. We are well into our 67th year of existence and I feel privileged to be addressing you today.

This past year has been one of the most eventful years in the history of both The UWI and the Union. Considering it from a pure scientific background, we can accurately diagnose something if we have seen something similar before; if not, like in the case of Covid-19, we must grope in the dark for a while before settling on what we are dealing with. We have seen aspects of The UWI that (some of us) might never have seen before, yet there were some aspects that we knew which, apparently, have got worse. It behoves us to remain vigilant and be ready to act in as decisive a manner as the situation warrants.

As you are aware, the majority of members (WIGUT) Jamaica represents are at the Mona campus, with others dispersed across its regional network in the Global Campus in Jamaica and UWI12+2 countries. We have considered how we can serve the membership better by improving support for members, and have agreed that this requires addressing their professional, financial, and personal needs while navigating the unique challenges of the region's higher education landscape. From a strategic perspective, we could consider and strengthen the following actionable items:

1. Enhance Advocacy for Better Compensation. This is being pursued through the Compensation Review, which formally started last year. The current position is a commitment by the Campus to submit the EY report and recommendations to the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service along with the Corrective Review that WIGUT (Jamaica) completed, along with concerns from the other Unions. Beyond this, we need to continue to push for timely salary adjustments, to strengthen negotiations with UWI management and the Jamaican government, perhaps, leveraging data on inflation (e.g., Jamaica's 6-8% annual rate in recent years), and/or interim relief packages (short-term cost-of-living adjustments) as demanded in the 2024 industrial action. Further, we need to strengthen our alignment with student groups during protests, as shared goals like better facilities strengthen both sides, as seen in past grade-withholding standoffs.

2. Expand Professional Development Opportunities. One aspect of my mission has been to encourage professional and personal development (PPD) of members. These PPD activities could involve tailored workshops on emerging academic trends, such as AI in higher education and healthcare, and climate-focused research, among others, which are relevant to Caribbean contexts. We could look to partner with UWI's research units or external bodies like CARPHA or

the EU or other global funding agencies to fund these. Certainly, creating a resource hub or clearinghouse for such information might be a useful strategy to adopt, especially as funding from the US dries up. In this way, WIGUT could bridge that gap. Furthermore, through its various sub-committees (finance/investment, grievance, legal, membership, public relations and publications, and research), or the various University committees (pension, occupational safety and health, Blue Book, Career Path), or via mentorship networks spanning the other WIGUTs, these could augment career guidance and amplify regional solidarity.

3. Improve Workplace Conditions. WIGUT has been lobbying The UWI for better lab equipment, reliable internet, and disaster-resilient facilities—crucial in a hurricane-prone region. The 2024 hurricane Beryl and 2025 hurricane Melissa fallouts showed how outages disrupt work; solar backups and satellite networks could be solutions. The Union continues to discuss workload management at cross-campus Blue Book meetings to establish caps on teaching load or administrative duties, several of which spiked during Covid-19. Burnout and eye, neck and lumbar issues were identified as common ailments, and while hiring support staff could ease this, the entrenchment of the Covid-19 agreement in the current collective labour agreement (2023-2026) means that we do not need to wait on a disaster to trigger negotiations for drawdown on funds for necessary equipment or items for emergency remote teaching and learning activities. One of the critical aspects identified following the passage of hurricane Melissa was the need for psychosocial support for staff. The writing has been on the wall following the pandemic, and experience with post-disaster trauma (post-traumatic stress disorder) should guide how we operate in the near term. Perhaps a strategic position might be to secure funding for counselling services or stress management workshops, and partnerships with academic and external agencies could make this scalable.

4. Boost Financial and Legal Support. The Union has a Welfare Fund that was established some time ago. The memo recently sent to members advised of the possibility of those affected by the hurricane receiving disaster relief through this Fund. There is a similar financial assistance mechanism being offered by the Mona Campus and the three Unions have been asked to select a representative among the Unions to sit on the selection committee. Another aspect of operations that could be strengthened, that WIGUT has advanced in discussions with the University General Counsel (UGC), is for the expanded role of the Visitor and to have an alternative dispute resolution framework, which would be triggered before matters advance to the Ministry of Labour. These discussions will continue with the new UGC.

5. Leverage Technology and Innovation. We need to ensure that our website is functional beyond information sharing, such that members can truly benefit from offerings such as a members-only portal with job aids, e.g., lesson templates and grant trackers; Strike tools, which could provide digital guides on legal rights and escalation steps during industrial actions; Data advocacy, where we use analytics to map member needs, e.g., surveys on workload, funding gaps, salary and benefits comparisons, for the benefit of members and for use when we are in negotiations with The UWI or the government. One of the aspects we have not done well is deepening our community and regional impact. Notwithstanding, the Solidarity Newsletter has provided timely information about negotiations activities, and a similar newsletter from the

Public Relations and Publications and/or Research sub-committees, could augment this process. For community engagement, we could consider public campaigns, such as radio and TV spots or X threads, to tap into public sentiment about the UWI and WIGUT; we could link with Unions beyond UWI (e.g., Jamaica Teachers' Association) for joint lobbying on education funding. Something that arose in relation to representing our colleagues in the Bahamas was that WIGUT (Jamaica) could no longer bargain for staff at the School of Clinical Medicine and Research (SCMR). One option presented to us, was to partner (via affiliation) with the local Union that has bargaining rights: the Union of Tertiary Educators of the Bahamas (UTEB). A similar situation has surfaced at the Five Islands Campus in Antigua and Barbuda, where a WIGUT (Antigua and Barbuda) is being formed, with WIGUT (Jamaica) forming an affiliation to carry out representation of the staff at the Campus.

A question that WIGUT (Jamaica) will need to consider is how the Union can significantly improve its support for Adjunct staff, whether in Jamaica, the Bahamas, or the UWI12+2, by addressing their unique challenges: precarious employment, limited benefits, and lack of institutional voice. As you know, Adjuncts, whether part-time or contract lecturers, are a growing segment of The UWI's workforce, especially at the Mona campus in Jamaica. One aspect of research that is needed is to collate the various labour laws within the UWIVERSE to determine how the Union can better serve persons who have these types of contracts. Several things were identified when we met with the Registrar of Trade Unions in the Bahamas in June 2025, which has prompted us to put this question squarely in front of the membership.

Colleagues, WIGUT (Jamaica) is a unique Union with members as direct stakeholders and in various places of influence within the Academy. There are some who would question whether the Union can adequately do its job of representing members with members occupying posts within the Academy. Perhaps this is rooted in the belief that conflict is inherent in the labour-management relationship. Of note, though, is that a significant number of others believe that especially in today's workplace, collaboration, rather than conflict, is better for a productive workplace. This is a reminder of the roundtable represented in our logo, and the reality that most modern trade unions are relying more on mediation and negotiation to achieve their goals. In reflecting on this question, though, I am reminded that all academic members of staff are members of one or other Faculty Board, which is a critical part of the governance of the campuses. There are members of staff that operate at a higher level, so to speak, as members of Academic Board, as Heads of Department, as Directors of Units, etc. We must bear in mind that while persons are members of the Union, or on the Executive, they are not representing the Union in those positions; they are there in their capacity as an academic. Those opportunities can never be removed, and the Blue Book is expressly clear about which position holders cannot be members of the Executive of the Union. For myself, as a Head of Department, member of Academic Board, Academic Board representative on the Senate, and Chair of the Occupational Safety and Health Committee, these roles have assisted me greatly in navigating some of the challenges that have faced the Union over the several years that I have been at the helm of this trade union, and I would not trade that experience for anything.

I have been blessed to have worked with some tremendous persons over the past year, especially the Executive and Management teams. According to Article 7.0 of the Constitution, the Executive Committee is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Union and for carrying out the policies of the Union, and between meetings of the Executive, the Management team has responsibility (Clause 10.3). While there may be concerns about decisions made by the Executive, all decisions are seriously considered and weighed, and are driven by consensus or majority vote, as appropriate. Just to remind members: it was this Executive that was tasked with considering the postponing of the AGM, both during the Covid-19 pandemic, and most recently for this year's staging, as based on national and international requirements, the financial report should be presented for the benefit of the members. In the case of decisions to host the Christmas party this year, we have explained in detail by communique, how we arrived at the decision, given the scope of the disaster of hurricane Melissa and the impact on the country. I want to thank the Executive for their dedication and hard work over the past year, and for the tremendous outpouring of support from so many members regarding the decision to issue vouchers this year.

As I close this report, let me say a few words about some of the achievements for this past year and a half:

- 1. We completed all negotiations for the 2023-2026 Triennium**, except for the SCMR in the Bahamas. The last one was signed earlier this month for the UWI12+2.
- 2. We successfully navigated the challenge by the Mona Campus to unilaterally reduce pension and health benefits to incoming staff**, thereby breaching the Blue Book rules. That matter is before the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.
- 3. We concluded discussions at the local level regarding the Compensation Review** and await the start of negotiations at the level of the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service.

Some things that are outstanding, and on which work is continuing, include the following:

1. FSSU discussions: Most of you might be aware of a planned move of the FSSU scheme to the Caribbean, given some KYC requirements that were recently imposed. Consequently, The UWI sought to find a suitable location where the scheme could be domiciled with all the protections and provisions now in place for the UK-based scheme. As you are aware, the UWI FSSU is not a UK-scheme as UWI is no longer affiliated with a UK university, and the matter is complicated because the original 1946 Trust Deed and Rules that govern the scheme does not specifically mention UWI by name. There was an extension granted to December 2025, however, the due diligence continues.

2. Alternative Dispute resolution framework discussions continue with the new UGC.

3. We have had to file a grievance against the Centre regarding lapsing in the payment of Study and Travel Grants to staff. This matter has been referred to the MLSS for settlement.

4. The Disability policy, which was approved at University F&GPC in 2024, is back on the agenda at Blue Book and Career Path, as we try to ensure that all staff are on equal footing as they navigate the academic space.

Finally, nothing that was said, either in this address, or reported in the eBook would have been accomplished without your involvement. We are stronger together, and we must remain united, even as there are many forces that might want to separate academic staff from senior administrative and professional staff. Let me recognize the work of Dr. Charmaine McKenzie and Mr. Dunstan Newman (Vice-Presidents), Ms. Anthia Muirhead (General Secretary), Ms. Sandra Stubbs and Ms. Audrey Saddler (Assistant General Secretaries); Mrs. Shana Hastings Edwards (Treasurer), Miss Merlyn Reid (Assistant Treasurer); Special Secretaries and Section Representatives; Dr. Donna Minott Kates (co-opted member – i/c constitutional matters and elections), Professor Hubert Devonish (Chief Negotiator), Mr. Gavin Walters (Industrial Relations Officer), Miss Frances Richards (Administrator) and Mr. Nathan Williams (Bearer). In the same breath, I also commend those who have served on the various Union committees, on University committees, as Section/Unit reps, as reps of the various Branches, and those dispersed in the UWI 12+2 countries. It has been an honour to serve the Union in this capacity over the past year plus, and I look forward to what is ahead.

Thank you.

Professor Paul D. Brown, JP

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

It is a pleasure to be with you again and to present this year's General Secretary's Report. Over the past 17 months, our union has navigated complex challenges while standing firm on the principles that define us: solidarity, professionalism, equity, and an unwavering commitment to staff welfare. This report outlines our key actions and achievements over the period.

Membership Support

For the period 2024-2025, our union continued to grow in strength and unity.

- **Membership increased** by 13% with the current membership standing at 861. This support reflects your continued confidence in our advocacy.
- **Training and leadership programmes** either developed or identified over the past year have empowered our membership and our Industrial Relations Officer thereby strengthening workplace structures. Additionally, the Professional Development Committee worked closely with HRMD providing an online workshop, which covers both academics and senior administrative staff.
- The Public Relations and Publications (PRP) team worked together to keep our members informed and educated. During the period, several editions of the *FlashNews* were published, highlighting:
 - Progress on the Compensation Review
 - Congratulatory Message to New Professors
 - In Memoriam
 - Highlights from Christmas Party – Amethyst Edition
 - New Members
 - UWI Paternity Leave Policy
 - Special Tribute to Sandra Minott
- To show love/support/appreciation to our members, the PRP Committee published and distributed commemorative flyers in recognition of:
 - Reggae Month
 - International Women's Day
 - Mothers' Day
 - Fathers' Day
 - International Men's Day
- **WIGUT Website** - The upgrade and updating of the Union's Website including the site maintenance and content management was part of the mandate for the PRP for this administrative year. Due to certain challenges this was not fully accomplished. It is hoped that this will be fully accomplished in the new administrative year.
- **Social Media presence** - The pages continue to be updated with content. Plans are afoot to make this a more dynamic and interaction space.

Grievances

The full Grievance Committee met once during the academic year 2024 – 2025. Despite only having one meeting, the period has been a very active one for the Committee members, who were all called upon to weigh in on cases, and lead the charge in at least one case, so that the members were served. Over the course of the year, the Committee, under the stewardship of the Grievance Secretary, Mr. Kurt Vaz, addressed the following matters:

1. Complaints

Several complaints that were received from members across campuses. The complaints ranged in issues, for example:

- a. Non-payment of Staff Development Fund award
- b. Living condition issues
- c. Unprofessional behaviour of Supervisors
- d. Contractual issues
- e. Interpersonal conflicts between staff members
- f. Inequity in the application of the rules governing the tuition exemption non-UGC funded programmes

Most of the complaints were resolved. However, up to the time of this report some of the complaints were still under investigation.

2. Collective Grievances

Three collective grievances were filed by WIGUT against The University of the West Indies and three individual grievances were submitted to WIGUT for consideration. The collective grievances had to do with:

- a. Breach of clause 2 of the 2023 – 2026 Collective Bargaining Agreement i.e., Staff Incentives for Professors at the top of the scale. This matter is currently before the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for Conciliation.
- b. Breach of clause 8 of the 2023 – 2026 Collective Bargaining Agreement i.e., Payment of Book Grant and Study and Travel Grant. The grievance procedure as per section of the Rules for Academics, Senior Administrative and Professional Staff (Blue Book) has been activated, as such the matter is currently before the Vice Chancellor for his action.
- c. Dispute between WIGUT (Jamaica) and The University of the West Indies, Mona, as it relates to health and pension benefits contributions. This matter is currently before the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for a resolution.

As it relates to the individual grievances that were filed, one has been resolved, one is open and being pursued, the final case is still under review

Negotiations/Collective Bargaining Agreements

The Negotiations Committee had regular weekly meetings in the period between May 2024 and the present. Outside of weekly meetings, the Committee remained in touch by way of a WhatsApp group and emails to ensure that all members were kept abreast of matters as they

arose, and that they were able to address/respond to matters in a timely fashion. The core function of the Negotiation Committee is to negotiate with the University management over terms and conditions of service for members of the union. In the period from the last AGM the Committee accomplished the following:

- Successfully negotiated the 2023-2026 Collective Bargaining agreement for the UWI 12 + 2, signed in October 2025. The highlight of this agreement was the 5% increase in each of the three years, a level of increase not seen for several triennia.
- Supported the WIGUT (Jamaica) representatives on the University convened Compensation Review Steering Committee; contributed to the union's Corrective Review of the Ernst and Young compensation recommendations; and established, through this review, the union's position on levels of compensation increases that should emerge from the compensation review process.
- Took the lead in the union's response to the University's proposal to reduce the health and retirement benefits for staff joining the University on or after 1st August 2025 and represented the union at the conciliation meetings at the Ministry of Labour.

The Negotiations Committee supported the Executive and Grievance Committees by helping them police the implementation of the present and past collective bargaining agreements. This involved:

- Drafting for the Grievance Committee the grievance claim against the University in relation to its violation of Clause 2 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- Drafting the correspondence to the University Centre about the non-reimbursement to members of sums spent in advance as part of approved Study and Travel Grant activities, which resulted in a commitment from the University to rectify the situation. And, consequent to the breakdown of this commitment, the drafting of a grievance claim against the University Centre on the matter.

Compensation Review Update

The work of the international consultants, Ernst and Young (EY), on the issue of Compensation Review for The UWI in Jamaica is now complete, having been carried out between September 2024 and May 2025. The Review was commissioned by the Government of Jamaica (GOJ), and their work monitored by the University and the three unions operating on the Mona Campus, via a Compensation Review Committee. As already mentioned, the Negotiations Committee supported the work of the WIGUT (Jamaica) representatives on the Steering Committee. The GOJ is in receipt of the consultant's report, as well as the Corrective Review from WIGUT (Jamaica) which lays out clearly how the percentage increases in compensation should be calculated. We are currently awaiting a meeting with the Government of Jamaica to commence negotiations around compensation review for our members.

Solidarity Newsletter

The Negotiations Committee, on behalf of the Union, published the newsletter, *Solidarity* at critical times during the year. Six articles were published between May 2024 and present.

The Union is stronger, more connected and prepared to stand in support of our members.

Sabbatical Leave Committee

The Sabbatical Leave Committee (SLC), comprising two representatives from WIGUT and Management respectively, as well as the Senior Assistant Registrar (HR) for Centre staff, as a resource person, met on July 2, 9 and 11, 2025. In keeping with its procedures, the Committee first ascertained the balance of the Sabbatical Pool and received confirmation that the funds in the Mona Sabbatical Pool were sufficient to cover the replacement costs for all Mona applicants. Confirmation was also received that the funds in the Centre Sabbatical Pool were sufficient to finance the replacement costs for two Centre staff notwithstanding an agreed provision to finance three.

Applications - Over the three meeting dates, the SLC considered 47 applications for sabbatical leave tenable in the 2026/2027 academic year. Of that number, 35 originated from Mona and 12 from the Centre, in addition to the 3 cases, deferred from the previous academic year, which were automatically ranked at the top of the priority list. While all applicants had qualified by points, only 11 of the 35 Mona cases received unconditional recommendations from the SLC to the Campus Appointments Committee for approval while the remaining 24 applicants received recommendations subject to the SLC's concerns being addressed. These concerns ranged from an inadequate/no Programme of Work to the need for research ethics approval, to the absence of comments from the Head of Department/Dean to the failure to have identified a replacement staff member.

With respect to the applications from the Centre, five (5) received unconditional recommendations from the SLC for transmission to the University Appointments Committee with the remainder being recommended subject to the similar inadequacies, as had been described for Mona, being addressed.

General Observations - It should be noted that it was not uncommon for the SLC to have to source the truth of an applicant's length of service from a paper record where the information in the database was not accurate or not current with respect to the date of previous sabbatical leave periods or the date by which an employee had transitioned from another bargaining unit to the WIGUT bargaining unit.

Moreover, despite the sensitisation sessions that the previous SLC Chair had held, it was still not uncommon for the SLC to receive incomplete applications, which the Committee, nevertheless, considered so as to assist the HRD in identifying issues requiring administrative follow-up. This allowed staff members grace, another chance at taking advantage of this important negotiated benefit in the applicable period.

One could therefore conclude that constant reminders/further sensitisation sessions continue to be necessary in light of the need for reducing the number of incomplete applications which have contributed to the undermining of the SLC's efficiency and effectiveness.

On a more positive note, the anticipated outcomes from the applicants' programme of work, in general, promises to be a fillip for personal and institutional advancement in the areas of publications, research, networking and project implementation.

Financial Management

The union maintained stable and responsible financial stewardship under the guidance of the Treasury team.

Transparency and accountability remain core commitments to our members.

Looking Ahead: Priorities for the Coming Year

As we move forward, our union will focus on:

1. **Securing wage improvements** to counter inflation and cost-of-living pressures.
2. **Strengthening capacity**, ensuring every department/section has an active union representative.
3. **Expanding welfare and mental-health services.**

We have built a strong foundation over the past 66 years. Now we must continue the work with renewed energy and unity. May all who come behind us find us faithful.

Conclusion

To every member, I extend my deepest gratitude. Your dedication in the lecture halls and in your administrative and professional fields coupled with your solidarity within the union are the reasons we succeed. As General Secretary, I have been honoured to serve you.

This report would not be complete without acknowledging and thanking the hardworking members of the Executive and Management Committees. Special commendations and thanks must also be given to the two full time staff who manage the daily operations of the WIGUT Secretariat. Indeed, the work of the General Secretary was made much smoother by the support of Ms. Frances Richards and Mr. Gavin Walters, consummate professionals who are committed to service of the Union.

Thank you!

Anthia Muirhead