NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION PILOT PROJECT

PARTNERSHIPS WITH SELECT PUBLIC & PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN (UCC) ACCREDITED A.SC DEGREES & POSSIBLY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MOEYI) OCCUPATIONAL ASSOCIATE DEGREES WITH SUPPORT FROM THE FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (FIU) and THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON (UOL)

JULY 2018

PROPOSAL/NOTIFICATION OF INTENT

❑ **Introduction/Objectives/Philosophy**

In addressing the concerns of many thousands of high school graduates interested in pursuing an accredited associate degree program (or a UOL LLB degree), on the completion of their CXC examinations, the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC) has been working on an innovative initiative to facilitate a seemless transition for graduates to acquire, either an accredited UCC associate degree or a MOEYI occupational associate degree or begin a University of London (UOL) LLB degree program in their own high school environment. Besides, it has also been acknowledged that regional tertiary institutions and governments have been persistent in their view that more credit should be given to regional associate degrees, as an alternate path or avenue towards pursuing a bachelor degree. The norm therefore should be the according of advanced placement such that high school graduates with the requisite CXC passes could initially complete their associate degree in an additional two years. In this regard, the accredited associate degrees being offered by the UCC can subsequently be used to articulate into either the UCC or Florida International University (FIU) Bachelor degree programs.

Therefore, as one considers the geography and economics of Jamaica, it becomes clear that further access to higher education can in fact be widened by making additional and formal provisions for students to complete either the MOEYI occupational associate degrees or the UCC lower level of certain bachelor's degrees offered at their own high school.

It is in this regard that the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC) **Jamaica's largest non-affiliated privately-held higher education institution** proposes to establish a pilot project with selected urban and rural high schools to launch in the first instance, three **associate of science degrees in Business, Information Technology programs & Hospitality Management** to selected high school graduates in Kingston and nine (9) other rural parishes. It is proposed that these lower level undergraduate degrees will seek to meet the tertiary training needs of thousands of high school graduates within the context of personal and national economic development.

It is our belief that Higher Education now constitutes a primary force driving the sustainability of development, and an undergraduate degree impacts positively on the life experiences of our graduates. It raises wages and productivity as well as enhancing the quality of civil society and in general, graduates earn more than non-graduates, particularly in the medium to long term. Unfortunately, it is well established that Jamaica lags far behind the rest of the Caribbean and North America in the number of students enrolled in higher education. According to a recent publication, **"nothing short of a higher education revolution will be adequate. Mass access to quality higher education, is Jamaica's and indeed the Caribbean's last chance to secure sustainable development". "The challenge for Jamaica is that we must effect an attitudinal transformation and create an entirely new mentality. That is, we must popularize the idea by rooting it in common sense, that without tertiary education, the citizens will be largely dysfunctional in the changed global arena"**

The planned lower level degree programs therefore will further help to accelerate the process of economic and social development of the targeted communities and the Country as a whole. These target sectors have long been recognised by the Government as a major training priority for Jamaica in terms of economic, social and human resource development. Importantly also, the initiative will focus on increasing the technological, and business capabilities of qualified high school graduates, as it has similarly been recognised that the region will become more dependent on the use of modern technological and business solutions for sustaining life and the pace of these sectors.

Designed specifically for qualified and recent high school graduates, the proposed A.Sc. degrees will deliver a total undergraduate education experience that prepares students for new and expanding careers in business, information technology, Law, inter alia.

i) Specific Objectives

The objectives of articulating qualified high school graduates (with relevant CXC passes) firstly, with UCC's **two-year full-time** associate degree or the MOEYI occupational associate degree programs are as follows:

A. To promote much greater access to tertiary education at the undergraduate level through **an alternate and innovative route**; the current level of access to tertiary training in Jamaica for the eligible age cohort 18-30 stands at an unacceptably low twenty (20) percent, approximately.

B. To enhance the quality of tertiary education and foster comprehensive secondary and tertiary institution development;

C. To promote national and institutional efficiency in the organisation and delivery of tertiary education; and

D. To set up a rational and efficient articulation system, which allows qualified high school CXC graduates who would subsequently be graduates of UCC's associate or bachelor degrees or FIU bachelor degrees to progress without undue duplication of effort or loss of time.

ii) Underlying Principles

In pursuing an articulation/transfer arrangement between the respective high schools and UCC, it is proposed that all parties will subscribe to the following common principles:

1. Student easier access to quality higher education will be a goal of the proposed partnership and this will be optimised and augmented through credit transfer arrangements;

2. Credit transfers between the respective high schools and UCC will be based on the understanding that learning experiences may differ in context and packaging but produce similar substantive outcomes in terms of knowledge and competencies;

3. UCC will have the primary responsibility for programme design and delivery at the lower degree level.

4. After admission of students to the UCC's associate degree program under the terms of the transfer agreement, students will enjoy the same privileges as students who begin their studies directly at the main UCC campuses in Kingston or other centres.

❑ **Market Size and Sustainability of Programs**

The market is very large with an increasing growth rate despite some adverse economic challenges. It has been long recognized and acknowledged that our own local and traditional tertiary institutions can only accommodate a limited number of part-time and full-time students during any given academic year; therefore there are many more qualified high school graduates wishing to enroll in local tertiary training institutions for which they do not have the capacity. The demand has in fact outstripped capacity. Approximately five thousand (~5000) Jamaicans migrate each year to pursue full-time undergraduate studies at US tertiary institutions. Evidently, therefore, there is a increasingly large market for qualified high school graduates who are interested in acquiring management, business or information technology skills and seeking to develop a sound career. Besides, studies and experiences have shown that young high school graduates now more than ever before, are continuously seeking higher educational opportunities so as to improve their lives and to be able to maintain themselves and their families through upward social mobility. Furthermore, the Jamaican business and information technology sectors will undoubtedly be demanding the most highly trained business and IT graduates in order to effectively compete in the global market economy.

The alliances will also provide a vehicle to further augment the UCC's and the respective host high schools' efforts to strengthen and improve the Institutions' own administrative and teaching capability.

Partnership with the schools will not be considered as an end in itself, but rather as a means toward achieving the Institutions' and programs previously stipulated objectives. Furthermore, with such an alliance, circumstances will be created in which all parties will benefit at the expenditure of minimal resources, both human and financial. Such win-win situations are likely to develop through the pooling and leveraging of teachers, faculties and facilities to provide reciprocal value and educational experiences in line with the broad objective and vision of UCC.

Of significance also is the fact that local UCC faculty & visiting FIU faculty who will work even for a short time at the respective school, will undoubtedly make the acquaintance of several high school teachers, some of whom could also be contracted part-time to teach in the lower level A.Sc degree program provided they have at least a masters degree.

Such acquaintances give rise to professional discussions, and possibly collaboration between local UCC faculty members and teachers.

Over time, whole networks can be developed among faculty and high school teachers at cooperating institutions, which can take on a life of their own.

❑ **Program Structure/Curriculum**

Relatively small classes will foster individual attention and a highly interactive learning environment in which students will share insights with and learn from each other as well. The programmes will incorporate diversified approaches to learning - from simulations to case studies to role-playing; they will use state-of-the-art information technologies, and target qualified high school graduates from Kington and other designated rural parishes.

Students will earn their A.Sc. degree at the end of **24 – 30 months** depending on whether they register to attend classes on a **full-time** or **part-time** basis. The programs therefore will be structured so that all academic requirements can be completed in a **maximum** of thirty (30) months.

It is proposed that courses be offered **weekdays,** on a **full-time** and/or **part-time basis** at the facilities of the respective high schools initially, commencing with introductory college credits during the summer of 2018**.**

The proposed A.Sc. degree programs will all emphasize some level of Information Technology. They will enhance the IT and information systems skills of students, and their ability to deal with the strategic issues faced by the IT/Information System and Business sectors in today's highly competitive global economy. The programs will emphasize the application of relevant IT strategies and skills to the problems and opportunities that the students might encounter in their own career endeavours.

The curricula for these lower level programs will consist of approximately **20 lower level** UCC courses on a **full-time (day)** or **part-time (afternoon/evening)** model. It is proposed that **one to three courses** will be offered in each term depending on the model. Courses will be focused and demanding, with greater emphasis on the application of theory to actual problems encountered by the Business and Information Technology sectors, and will be enriched by the students and faculty themselves.

In addition, having a cohort of students proceeding through each program together will facilitate further team work, group cohesion, and networking among the Jamaican graduates.

A.Sc. Degrees - Proposed Curriculum:

1. 60-65 semester hour with a minimum 2.0 GPA and General Education
   Requirements fulfilled.

2. The following core areas must be completed by students admitted to study in any of the **A.Sc.** degree programs:

General Education Courses	Calculus
Humanities	Statistics
Computer Application	

Students should complete all these lower-level requirements before contemplating taking upper-level course work in a B.Sc. degree program at UCC or FIU. In some cases, with the permission of an academic advisor, a student could enroll in limited upper-level course work while completing the lower-level prerequisites at the UCC.

Methods and Arrangements for the Assessment of Students and Standards Required

Student Outcomes

Student Outcome 1:
Graduates will have the necessary skills for the professional and career positions appropriate for an associate degree in their particular discipline.

Assessment Criteria/Standards:
A. At least 75% of graduates will have at least entry-level supervisory full-time positions within 6 months after graduation.

Method:
*   Every year the UCC will survey its graduating students from this program and analyse data to determine placement rates of our graduates.
*   Every 2 years the UCC will survey a sample of employees from the relevant employee database to determine what are the competencies necessary in these positions and the institution will incorporate these with other competencies identified in the literature. UCC will then use the results in its planning and implement changes where appropriate.

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Student Outcome 2:

Graduates will be able to begin and progress in their careers.

Assessment Criteria/Standards:

A. On average, graduates will have increased their salaries by 100% after five years.
B. On average, graduates who proceed directly to the world of work, will have obtained
    two job promotions within the first five years of graduation.

Method:

*   Alumni will be surveyed every two years to ascertain salary and job information and their
    ratings of knowledge received.

Student Outcome 3:

Graduate will feel that their A.Sc. degree adequately prepared them for **competitive** entry and
senior level Business and Information Technology positions and with the foundation for growth
in their **careers;** and with adequate training in oral and written communication skills, effective
teamwork, and computer skills.

❑   **The Proposed Facilities where Instructions will be Offered:**

It is proposed that classes will be held at the facilities of the respective high schools in Kingston
and designated rural areas, initially. Most high school venues will provide excellent instructional
environment with spacious, well-lit and comfortable class-rooms. Instructors will have
immediate access to overhead multimedia projectors, TV monitors and VCR's at all such
designated venues. The UCC will provide all office infrastructures, support services such as
duplicating machines. The high school locations are convenient as they will also provide
adequate library and computer resources for students access.

As part of an all-inclusive package, students will be provided with all required course materials
for the program, but will also be expected to utilise the Library facilities of their own high school

for purposes of further research and study. It is proposed that the UCC will provide additional and relevant library resources to be placed at these libraries, which will support each curriculum.

❏ **The Qualifications of Local Faculty who will be Involved in this Planned New UCC Associate Degree Project**

Regular or adjunct faculty who teach on campus courses at UCC will teach most courses in the outreach program. Most will have either a M.Sc in appropriate discipline or a minimum requirement of a bachelor degree with at least 120 credit hours of undergraduate instruction in the area of discipline:

a)   Experience in teaching non-traditional degree programmes
b)   Experience in teaching undergraduates
c)   Proven track record
a)   Flexibility and adaptability
b)   Show understanding of unique needs of a part-time (evening) or full-time (day) A.Sc. degree programme offered off-site.

❏ **The Arrangements to be Made to Provide Learning Resources and Services of an Appropriate Breath and Quality to Students Enrolled in the Proposed Outreach A.Sc. Degree Programs:**

Courses to be taught in the Outreach programs will be text based as well as online. Resources needed to augment and supplement course readings will be placed in all designated school libraries by the UCC.

Additionally, participants will have full access to search and retrieve all business, IT and general education related materials and texts at the main library of the UCC or online.

The programs will deliver all courses requiring specific IT applications on the UCC campuses in Kingston & rural Jamaica. Additional computers may be made available at the appropriate facilities of the designated schools.

❑ **<u>Additional Means by which the UCC will Provide Support</u> <u>Services for Students Involved</u> i<u>n these Lower Level Undergraduate Degree Programs</u>**

The Program Directors/Coordinators and the UCC Articulation Manager will work with individual students/applicants to facilitate admission into the respective programs.

It is expected that some amount of basic support will also be provided by the designated high school to achieve the smooth expedition of procedures relating to admissions, scheduling, and registration. The UCC will be responsible for all record keeping/maintenance as well as general student advisement and counseling.

i) Admission Process

For each associate degree program, students will be admitted as Lower Division transfers from their own high schools.

The specially appointed local Program Directors will invite each candidate to an interview to determine that the minimum requirements for each programme are satisfied. Such a candidate will be required to fill out the UCC's A.Sc degree admission application form.

The final decision will be made directly by the UCC, after each candidate has satisfied normal entry requirements as determined by the UCC's Admissions Office.

ii) Proposed Skills Assessment used by the UCC to Monitor Recruitment Process

Proposed Assessment Criteria/Standards:

A. A minimum of 25 students to be recruited for each new entering class.

B. Overall quality of student is perceived as being high (established minimum criteria are met)

C. Candidate shows good potential for completing program requirements (CXC results good, appears motivated, understands and accepts the demands required by a part-time or full-time degree programme)

D. Candidates will attend an orientation session held two weeks prior to the start of the program (mandatory for prospective students)

E. Candidates will accept their responsibility to perform satisfactory towards the attainment of all requirements for the associate degrees in their respective disciplines.

iii) Entry Requirements – UCC A.Sc. Degree:

A. Four (4) or Five (5) CXC passes including Mathematics and English Language.

B. Satisfactory completion of interview process

PROPOSED RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS:

The Designated High Schools in each Cluster:

Proposed responsibilities of the **designated high schools in each cluster**:

The designated school will:

i) Provide an appropriate classroom(s) facility for all courses and instructions offered at the said high school.

ii) Provide a small office facility to accommodate the UCC administrative staff who will be responsible for the day to day affairs of each outreach operation.

iii) Host periodic visits by official representatives of the UCC.

The University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC):

Proposed responsibilities of the **UCC:**

UCC will:

i)   Upgrade and refurbish the **designated classroom(s)** to be used during the delivery of the degree programme(s).

ii)   Provide all equipment and materials required for delivering each programme.

iii)   Design and deliver the respective associate degree programmes.

iv)   Serve as sole examiners or with FIU, where necessary, and moderators of all UCC associate degree programs.

v)   Provide instructors to conduct approved courses of the respective A.Sc. degree programs.

vi)   Counsel students about course selection and any required prerequisites.

vii)   Recruit prospective and eligible high school graduates for each program.

viii)   Receive, collate, process and distribute relevant information to students and parents.

ix)   Identify any procedural and inter-institutional challenges, make interventions or recommendations.

x)   Assist qualified students in accessing appropriate local student loans for financing their studies. **Students pursuing the UCC's associate degree programs are eligible for student loans from the Government's Students Loan Bureau, SLB.**

xi)   Conduct graduating ceremonies and award the A.Sc. degree to those students who have successfully completed the program and met the academic requirements for the A.Sc. in Business Administration, Information Technology, Hospitality Management or Law.

Local Companies/Corporations:

Both UCC's Associate and proposed Occupational Degrees will benefit from local commercial and industrial linkages, which will allow students to gain hands-on experience in

a variety of ways, as well as the potential for employment following graduation. This will create a workforce pipeline that will be attractive to corporate Jamaica setting up or expanding operations in a given area/parish.

Corporations will mentor and provide internships for students seeking certain associate degrees that they need so that when they graduate, they are ideal candidates to fill critical positions for them. They will therefore provide a hiring advantage to potential graduates who successfully complete the program over candidates who might apply.