



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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The University of the West Indies Actuarial Society



by Shani Bryan

The University of the West Indies Actuarial Society (UWIAS) was launched in 2002 at the University's Mona campus in Jamaica. Membership is open to all students studying actuarial science and associate membership to faculty, staff and students' spouses. The Society's main purpose is to assist students in understanding the professional field of actuarial science, as well as to foster interaction and to facilitate communication between students and prospective employers.

The first Executive Committee, which served from 2002-2003, was inspired by a wish for more interaction with the actuarial community and integration of the actuarial science year groups at the university. In the first year of the club, two members of the Caribbean Actuarial Association, Mrs. Janet Sharp, FSA, and Mr. Astor Duggan, FIA, visited and shared their different perspectives on actuarial practice with the members. Actuarial students have had an open invitation to attend the student sessions whenever the Caribbean Actuarial Association's (CAA) conference is held on the island.

UWIAS hosted its first annual Awards Ceremony and Dinner on Sunday Feb. 11, 2007 at the Terra Nova Hotel. This provided an opportunity for interaction between actuaries, other members of the CAA and actuarial science students, whilst honoring top students for excellent academic performance.

The function was attended by many top Jamaican actuaries, including the guest of honor, the first black female fully certified actuary (FIA 1970), the Honorable Mrs. Daisy McFarlane-Coke O.J., C.D., FIA, affectionately

known as "the grandmother of all Jamaican actuaries."



Guest of honour Hon Daisy McFarlane-Coke (left) and Director of Actuarial Sciences Mr. St. Elmo Whyte (2nd right) mingle with the UWIAS Executive: President Rohan Hall, Secretary Shani Bryan, Vice President Kerron Blandin, PRO Karla Guthrie & Treasurer Tameeka Howard

Ms. Cathy Lyn FSA, FIA, newly appointed Society of Actuaries' Ambassador to Jamaica, graced the attendees with an inspiring speech. She commended the UWIAS' efforts in bringing together the practicing actuaries and the students, stating that the "mixing of generations is part of developing a culture which contributes to strengthening the profession and building bonds which are good for the future." She also called for actuaries to make contributions in areas including: the development of social policy, identifying and addressing relevant issues of concern to the profession, publishing a position statement or issuing a press release and contributing to policy in health, long-term care, and personal



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finance. Ms. Lyn also mentioned, in particular, the current work needed to strengthen the retirement system as pension reform takes place in Jamaica.

The prize-giving segment of the event sought to recognize outstanding performance for the previous academic year. Awards for obtaining first class honors degrees in actuarial science went to Andre Brown, Anika Peart, Candice Green, Mikhail Francis and Shayna Stennett.



Awardees of first class honours degrees in actuarial science in 2006 : Mikhail Francis, Candice Green, Andre Brown, Shayna Stennett and Anika Peart (missing from photo)

Recipients of awards for exceptional performance in the second year were Candace Rollock, Jeneve Jackson and Rohan Hall; while Gillian Jackson, Keneisha Powell, Kezia Dalrymple, Rohanne Beckles and Shani Bryan were honored for outstanding performance in the first year. Additionally, Mr. W. St. Elmo Whyte, FIA, and Ms. Yvette Johns, ASA, director and coordinator of the actuarial science programme respectively, were awarded tokens of appreciation for their contributions to the UWIAS.

The UWIAS' main project, the mathematics tutoring program, was the focus of President Rohan Hall's speech. October and November of 2006 saw the Society at Jamaica College, a well-known high school for boys on the island. The aim was to tutor mathematics at the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations

(CAPE) level (equivalent to GCE A Levels) and to make the students aware of the field of actuarial science. Students were given overviews of topics covered in class and individual attention. In March and April of 2007, attention was directed to Holy Childhood High School (for girls) where a similar program is being undertaken.

Mr. Hall also implored actuaries and their organizations to follow the lead of the CAA in assisting actuarial science students by offering summer internships or establishing a scholarship fund. Recently, the CAA donated US\$10,000 to the actuarial program for purchasing books for students.

Please visit the UWIAS Web site at <http://uwiactscisoc.tripod.com/index.html> □