# UCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION UCC ALUMNI

GROUP



#### UNIVERSITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN Fostering Leadership & Innovation

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We are UCC - United, Connected and Committed



### Message to the UCC Alumni from the UCC Interim President Professor Eleanor Brown

Dear Alumni,

Sending you my heartfelt wishes for a fantastic 2024, a year that already shows promise for positive change and improvement. The University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC) is actively adjusting its strategies to enhance the delivery of services to our students. I've gathered from the recent newsletters by the UCC Alumni Association's Executive Body, along with other reports, that significant accomplishments have been made by the dedicated team of Nicola Martin, Kayann Morgan, Juneika Canegan, and Jonathan Johnson. They successfully organized an Annual General Meeting in April, a bingo party in August, and various community outreach projects, including one in December 2023. It brings me joy to witness the networking among alumni and your involvement in supporting those less fortunate.

As you read through the Alumni Association's February 2024 Newsletter, I encourage you to

reflect on the commendable work of the UCCAA and consider how you can contribute to a positive impact on our students and community members. Your support through scholarships and annual contributions to the UCC Ignite Community Impact Fund (UCC Ignite) is vital. While we had hoped to award the first UCC Alumni Association scholarship in the 2023/24 academic year, it has been postponed to the next year, 2024/25, to ensure the program's sustainability.

While all graduates are alumni, formal membership in the Association directly contributes to providing an annual scholarship to a deserving student. I urge you to play your part through association dues and other contributions.

I acknowledge that your journey at the UCC was marked by personal hard work, discipline, and sacrifice, leading you to become one of our successful alumni. However, there are students facing challenges for various reasons, and your support can make a significant difference. UCCAA membership dues allocate 50% to scholarships, 25% to community outreach, and 25% to supporting the Association's operational costs, offering you an easy way to contribute to national development.

Wishing you the very best for 2024 and eagerly anticipating your involvement in the impactful work of the UCC Alumni Association.

Professor Eleanor Brown, Interim President, UCC



### Message to the UCC Alumni from the UCCAA President Nicola Martin

Dear Fellow Alumni,

I am honoured to have this opportunity to be your Alumni Association President of our esteemed university. As I pen this message to you, I am reminded of the incredible journey that brought each and every one of us to this moment.

We all have our own unique stories about our time at this university. The friendships we made, the challenges we faced, and the lessons we learnt. But what unites us is our shared experience of being part of a community that is dedicated to excellence and to making a positive impact in the world.

As we look back on our time at this institution, we should take pride in all that we have accomplished. We have earned degrees in fields as diverse as accounting, law, business administration, social work etc., and have gone on to make a difference in our communities and our careers.

But our connection to this noble institution does not end with graduation. We are all part of a larger network of alumni who are making a difference in the world. Whether it is through mentoring current students, participating in alumni events, or supporting the university and its students financially, there are many ways for us to stay connected and give back.

I encourage every one of you to get involved with the alumni association and stay connected with your alma mater. We have a strong and vibrant community, and together we can make a lasting impact on the institution and the world.

I look forward to your support and let's continue to make our university proud.

#### We are UCC - United, Committed, Connected!

Sincerely,

Nicola The UCC Alumni Association President



### Message to the UCC Alumni from the UCCAA Vice President Kayann Morgan

Happy 2024 Alumni,

I hope this message finds you well. As Vice President of our alumni association, I am honoured to serve in this role and excited to connect with all of you as we embark on a new year.

Our shared experiences at our alma mater have left a lasting impact on each of us, and I believe that our bond as alumni is something truly special. As we look to the future, I am committed to working with all of you to strengthen our alumni community and create meaningful opportunities for continued engagement.

I encourage each of you to stay connected with us through our newsletter, social media, and other communication channels. I also welcome your ideas and input on how we can best serve and support our fellow alumni.

I look forward to the year ahead and to the opportunity to build upon the incredible legacy of our alumni association. Thank you for your ongoing support and participation. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of our fellow alumni and our alma mater.

#### We are UCC - United, Committed, Connected!

Warm regards,

Kayann. UCC Alumni Association Vice President



# UCC Alumni Association MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

The primary goal of implementing a student mentorship program within the University is to create an environment of academic support and collaboration. By encouraging Alumni to take on the role of mentors, we aim to foster a sense of community and mutual assistance.

Contact the UCCAA office:

uccalumnioffice@ucc.edu.jm

Click the link below and Join the movement: https://forms.gle/9CoRFDxReQFGYWfW7

#### BENEFITS

**Personalized Guidance**: Receive one-on-one guidance tailored to your unique aspirations and challenges.

**Professional Development**: Gain insights and strategies to enhance your skills, expand your network, and advance your career.

**Networking Opportunities**: Connect with industry experts and like-minded individuals to broaden your horizons and explore new opportunities.

**Confidence Building**: Build confidence and self-assurance as you navigate your professional journey with the support of a mentor/mentee.

**Long-lasting Relationships**: Cultivate meaningful relationships with mentors and fellow mentees that extend beyond the program duration.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

UCC ALUMNI

ASSOCIATION

	Feb	<ul> <li><b>19 - 23</b> Cultural Week across the campuses. An Initiative by the Student Council and the alumni association</li> <li><b>23</b> - Fundraiser - UCCAA Pudding and Toto Sale</li> </ul>
	Mar	<ul> <li>3 - 9 Scavenger Hunt across the campuses - there will be fun activities associated with the house colours</li> <li>28 - UCC Sports Day</li> </ul>
	Apr	<b>UCCAA General Meeting and Executive Committee -</b> Nominations Open
	May	<b>Child Month Initiative</b> 23 - Labour Day Initiative - to be decided, likely in partnership with campuses.
	Jun	Virtual Bingo & Social
	Jul	UCCAA Executive Committee - Elections
	Sep	Hand-over to new Executive Committee

## Outreach Initiatives Update and Future Plans

In 2023 the UCC Alumni Association executed several outreach activities. Some of the activities were in partnership with the regional campuses.

The UCC Alumni Association would like to continue these activities and partnerships and increase our impact as we continue to play our part in nation-building.

The outreach activities for 2023 were as follows:

On May 20th of 2023, we visited the Reddies Place of Safety in keeping with Child's Month and had a "Day of Play" which was a success and the children that reside at the home welcomed our alumni members as we interacted. We would like to revisit this in 2024 and we intend to also visit another home that houses children and interact with them in a way that fosters them to think beyond their existing reality.

We would also like to continue our partnership with the regional campus with labour day projects for 2024. We were only able to partner with the Mandeville campus for a labour day project in 2023. For the labor day projects to come to realization and be successful we would need the involvement of our alumni members to come out in their numbers and volunteer as we work in conjunction with all the campuses of the institution.

We also executed several community outreach projects in December 2023. The alumni association initiated and executed a "Spa Day" at TLC Home for the ageing and senior citizens on December 29th. It is the hope of the UCC Alumni Association executive body to increase its reach for the December initiative by doing more which means for 2024 we would like to do two projects. The UCC alumni association partnered with the Ocho Rios campus and carried out community outreach on Friday, December 1, 2023 at The Mustard Seed communities: Jacob's Ladder in Moneague, St. Ann. We also partnered with the Mandevilles campus to carry out community outreach on Wednesday, December 20, 2023 at Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf- Knockpatrick Campus.

The alumni association needs the support of our members to continue to grow its outreach initiatives for 2024.

### UCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Christmas

Projects



# **TLC NURSING HOME**



Mr. Enoch Allen, a UCC alumni member, joined the Spa day visit at TLC Nursing and retirement home.

















# Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf











Cash donation from staff and UCC Alumni

# Mustard Seed Communities















# UCC Alumni

Dr. Randy Stewart is an Assistant Professor and Head of Department for the School of Behavioural Sciences, Humanities and Law at the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC). He graduated from the UCC in 2019 with a Bachelor's degree in business administration. He earned his doctorate degree from the Swiss School of Business and Management and his thesis focused on the influence of transformational leadership on organisational growth, development, employee motivation and retention. Dr. Stewart is a young professional who is making strides in the Education Industry while impacting the life of youth both locally and internationally.



**Dr. Randy Stewart** 

#### As a male academic, what are your views regarding the major challenges that male students face in the Jamaican academic environment?

In the Jamaican academic environment, most males believe that they do not need a higher education to survive in this modern era that we now live in. However, I must allude that the male student faces numerous challenges in the Jamaican academic environment. I must start by saying that there are not many male educators in this industry, so male students will not be motivated in the classroom or online settings. Hence, this will definitely impact the male students' sense of belonging and hinder their personal and professional development.

Back in my days at the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC), I remember vividly in my Academic Writing II class when there were approximately 60 female students and only 5 male students. This ratio alone depressed me in the classroom. But I did not let that stop me from becoming successful in that course.

Of course, other male students were affected by this ratio in the academic environment, which caused them to drop their courses and take long leaves of absence.

As males, we encountered a lot of discrimination in the academic environment. This is mainly because most women believe that education belongs to them. If a male student is pursuing degrees in areas such as Human Resources Management, Nursing, Midwifery, Teaching etc., society will view them a particular way. This is one of the major reasons why men stay away from the education industry and look mostly towards the construction sites.

Conformity is a major challenge for men in society. Thus, men tend to conform more than females, therefore, most men in society have no interest in higher education. So they tend to fall victim to other societal activities which can be good or bad.

There is a stigma going around that men are not good enough to be leaders in the Education Industry. Research shows that 95% of educational leaders in Jamaica are women.

Upon further investigation, UNESCO elaborated that "males are increasingly left behind in education. They are at greater risk of repeating grades, failing to progress and complete their education, and not learning while in school. Boys are more likely than girls to experience physical bullying and are often targeted because of their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity or expression."

### **Interview with Dr Randy Stewart**

#### What initiatives could be taken to attract more males to tertiary education?

More males are needed in the tertiary education which is crucial at this time. We all have 24 hours in a day and most men are not making use of their 24 hours. There are various initiatives that can be put in place to attract males to tertiary education. In order for males to be attracted to tertiary education, there should be a removal of gender stereotyping. Once this is done, males will feel comfortable pursuing degree/s in their interest without any "backlash".

Not only that, we also need an Association for males that will provide support for men in today's world. This Association will teach them that they should "fight" for their rights and live up to the ethical standards in society. This is a way to "empower" the men in today's society. Once this is done, they will feel a sense of love and belonging to the education industry.

There should be "Free Education" or "Scholarship" opportunities for men in today's society. This is a driving force to see more men in the education industry. More organizations need to come together and help to create a better future for our males by providing scholarships and mentoring programs.

I have benefited from organizations in Jamaica such as UCC etc., where they funded me right throughout my college life, and this is the main reason why I am attracted to the education industry because I want to see both males and females achieve their goals and become well-rounded individuals in society and also, I want to give back to society.

When it comes to the education industry, males are delicate like an egg, and we have to be careful of how we treat them. With that being said, there should be counselling-like programs for men in the education system. Once there are counselling programs, men will make use of this, and we will see more of them in the education system of Jamaica.

### What about engagement in the classroom, how do you think teachers can plan student engagement that is attractive to both female and male students?

You used the word engagement "lightly", but this is a very serious word when it comes to learning. In the classroom settings, teachers/lecturers must use gamification techniques to engage the students. Gamification is the integration of game elements, mechanics, and design techniques into non-game contexts to engage and motivate students. The goal of gamification is to leverage the motivational aspects and enjoyable elements of games to enhance the student's interaction as well as achieve specific objectives.

Moreover, the teachers/lecturers must ensure that they engage the students in discussions which is crucial to learning. Once this is done, the students will be able to understand the topics that they are discussing. Not only that but the students can also be placed in breakout sessions where they can work together in a group and build a bond together.

These tactics will be attractive to both males and females in the classroom setting. These students will look forward to class every week once they are fully engaged.

Thus, this is a great way to foster a healthy learning environment in classroom and online settings.

### **Interview with Dr Randy Stewart**

## There is a view that men are not attracted to Higher Education because it takes too long to monetize their investment. What do you think about the view that a mans' time is better served if he engages in income earning rather than in studying?

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela. "It will take long, but not forever." Therefore, higher education is the best way to earn a "fair and square" income. Based on investigation, persons with education are the breadwinners for their families, and I strongly believe that men should invest their time in higher education.

Not all income earnings are legitimate. Is it that they will always be earning from these incomeearning activities? Is it that 2 years down the line they are scammed because they want to earn extra cash?

We can't give away sure for unsure. Once men invest in education, later down the line, they will be earning their legitimate monthly income.

Money is the root of all evil, and men have to be careful with those income-earning activities that they are engaged in.

Let's take a look at the Social Media influencers. They are on different social media platforms earning over 3000USD monthly. Is it a case where social media will always be around to pay them monthly? Based on extensive research, I found that Facebook and Instagram influencers will no longer be paid for posting reels and short videos.

So you see, "Time is better served if they invest in education."

"Labour for learning before you grow old, for learning, is better than silver and gold, silver and gold will vanish away, but a good education will never decay" – Desmond Dekker

#### Tell us a bit about your personal experience choosing to invest in Higher Education.

Choosing to invest in higher education has been a pivotal and transformative decision in my life. From a tender age, I strongly believed that education was vital. I realized that once I have an education, opportunities are opened up for me all over the world.

In my personal experience growing up in the countryside, I saw 95% of the youth are not enrolled in school because they do not have the resources, or they drop out of school. So, they are on the street every day playing football and fighting. I told myself that I did not want to end up in this situation. From that day, I invested all my time in schooling because my goal was to educate the youth so that they know how valuable education is and become a role model for youth in our society.

Choosing to invest in higher education began with a profound realization that higher education was not merely about obtaining degrees but embarking on a transformative experience that would shape my character and allow me to become a well-rounded individual.

When I was a student at UCC, I led various study sessions and when I explained the concepts, my classmates tended to understand me more than the lecturers. Hence, they told me that I should pursue a career in teaching as a profession.

In addition, seeing where I am coming from, most of my family members are not educationally inclined, so I told myself that I wanted to go "All Out" and make them proud.

Today, here I am educating the youths. As an educator, one of my goals is to inform students that education is vital because it is the catalyst for personal and societal development, economic prosperity, social cohesion, and global progress.

### **Interview with Dr Randy Stewart**

#### What would you say to young men who are wondering if going back to school is "worth it"?

Going back to school is "worth it". Education is the key to poverty and the key to closed doors. This is the best route to earn a legit "income earning." It is also the greatest form of self-investment. Men should make use of every opportunity in higher education before they reach retirement age. My 85-year-old grandfather told me that one thing he regrets right now is not going to school. So, I urge all young men to go to school now and make use of education. Once they have an education, they will not have to worry about the future.

Once these young men go back to school, they will be able to broaden their horizons, develop critical skills, and unlock doors to a myriad of possibilities. As I indicated earlier, education serves as a mechanism for self-discovery, empowering individuals to explore their passions and strengths while honing essential life skills such as critical thinking, communication, and adaptability. It is a journey that not only enhances career prospects but also instils a sense of confidence and resilience. I will not turn a blind eye to see that education is expensive and it can be hard to balance work and study, but I am saying "loudly" that education's long-term benefits far compensate for the initial obstacles.

# Want to be featured in our next Newsletter?

# UCCAA Featured Business Partners

#### Name: Gregory Segree

Business: Segree's Day Spa Ltd Program of study: Information Technology



#### Please share a short profile of yourself.

I am family-oriented. I seek to contribute to the development of others because it contributes indirectly to the development of our future leader in society. I include the family in the strategic planning of our ideas for the business.

In what year did you begin your studies at UCC? I started my academic study at UCC in 2009.

What degree programme were you registered in? MSc In Information Technology.

#### Give a brief overview of your current business:

Segree's Day Spa promotes a family oriented environment. We cater for adults and children, where applicable, with aesthetic service. These services would include waxing, pedicure, manicure, facial, massages and spa party events.

### To what extent did your studies at UCC motivate you to start your own business?

During my studies I wasn't even thinking of having a day spa.

### What are the top five (5) challenges faced in starting /operating your business?

Challenges that we experienced were being able to acquire the startup capital, managing the financials, staffing, cash flow and location.

#### How did you mitigate these challenges?

We sought advice from multiple resources such as friends and family, business owners, consultants and educational institutions in the sector.

### What is the most satisfying experience about owning your own business?

The satisfying therapeutic experience that the services and the environment have on our clients.

### What are your top tips for other UCC alumni who want to start their own business?

Assess the sector of business you are interested in. Always plan ahead. Be strategic in your decision making. Change is constant so embrace it. Maximize on readily available technology and social media platforms.





# Solution Contraction Contracti



#### Have a bite during UCC's Culture Week, February 19-23 @The Worthington Avenue Campus

Want to enjoy more than just I slice? You can follow the link below to pre-order and pay for a whole banana bread, pudding (bread or sweet potato) that comes with 4 slices each or toto (8" round)!!!

#### See link for the pre-order form in the email or send the order and payment receipt to uccalumnioffice@ucc.edu.jm by Feb 20 @ 9:00AM

Please note that all profits will be used by the UCCAA to support our community outreach and other initiatives.

# UCC Alumni Association Fundraising

### 100% cotton





## UCC Alumni Association Fundraising









# UCC Youth Forum and Business Expo

UCC celebrated youth with a Forum and Business Expo on Thursday, 30th November 2023 which featured and focused on youth, particularly on our students from the UCC Academy. The Business Expo included booths where UCC students showcased their entrepreneurial skills whether as musicians, social media content providers, producers of jewellery, T-shirts, fine art and home-made ice cream amongst other items. Totally Male Spa, a successful business established and operated by UCC alumna, Sandra Samuels was featured.



In the morning, a Youth Forum on Gender & Education explored the gender imbalance seen in secondary and especially tertiary institutions. The panellists included Mrs Tina Issak, Policy Analyst with the Bureau of Gender Affairs in the Ministry of Culture, Entertainment, Gender & Sport and Mr Adrian Dunkley, CEO of StarApple AI. Mrs. Emprezz Golding was the vibrant moderator and led the students and other participants towards identifying the potential solutions to the challenges.

Mrs. Issak presented statistics collated by her office showing that fewer boys are doing well in school compared to girls but more boys and young men are involved in crime and violence. The group recognised that whilst socio-economic challenges faced both males and females, culturally, young men are under more pressure to support their families at an earlier age than young women.



From left to right:Dr. Susan Otuokon, UCC; Eshiva Wright -Ms Caribbean UK 2023; Emprezz Golding - Forum Facilitator; Dr. Leleith Tomlinson, UCC; Mrs. Tina Issak - Bureau of Gender Affairs; Mr.Adrian Dunkley -Starapple AI.

# UCC Youth Forum and Business Expo

One component of the discussion was the need to introduce more interactive and practical teaching methods to keep boys, in particular, interested. The use of artificial intelligence including a variety of software applications and gaming was highlighted by Mr. Dunkley from Starapple AI who spoke of his struggles with learning through traditional methods. If boys are "turned off" by school at an early age they are just waiting to drop out of the education system as early as possible and due to socio-economic challenges, the risk of them becoming engaged in illegal income-generating activities is high. Miss Caribbean UK 2023 – Eshiva Wright, who was visiting Jamaica as part of her Caribbean prize tour said, "The future of education looks bright if entrepreneurship and innovation can be more integrated into education to better engage our youth, particularly young men".

Throughout the day, information on undergraduate programmes including associate degrees and advice for prospective and current students was provided. In the afternoon, staff from the UCC Business Development & Consulting Institute (BDCI) made presentations on, "Using innovation to Build out your Business Idea" and "Addressing the Challenges most often faced by Entrepreneurs".

The presentations were well received by both UCC students and students visiting from the St. Hugh's and Merl Grove High Schools. The UCC BDCI provides training through short courses and consultancies including mentoring and other assistance to entrepreneurs to help establish and grow businesses.





UNIVERSITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN Fostering Leadership & Innovation

THEME Igniting, Impacting your world; Celebrating Your Success

Thursday | Dec. 21, 2023 | 4pm | All Campuses

#### @UCCJAMAICA

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM UCC STUDENT CEREMONY AWARD



Celebrating the sUCCess of our students



Oneil Dowe was acknowledged and awarded for his support and involvement in the UCC alumni association as the most active member.

Oneil donates and attend all activities of the alumni association since September 2022. He was one of the many alumni members that answered the call to donate to the UCC alumni association scholarship to be offered to current UCC students.







Tamoya Watts was acknowledged and awarded for her support and involvement in the UCC alumni association as the most supportive member.

Tamoya has donated to all the UCC alumni association activities of the alumni association since September 2022. Tamoya would check in with the alumni association office to find out about upcoming outreach events and ask how she can help.

# UCCAA Business Partners

Members of the UCC Alumni Association (who are current with their membership dues and have their ID Card) can access discounts from our Business Partners as follows (so please register for the Alumni Association and pay your dues which support scholarships and community needs)





**Fire Design Agency** 

Online Store

Tel: (876) 817-5465

firedesignagency.com

Discount - 10%

#### Netcom Computer Solutions Ltd.

7 West Street, Old Harbour, St. Catherine

Tel: (876) 745-2391 netcomstores@gmail.com

Discount - 5%



#### **Paradise Catering and Decor**

195 Spanish Town Rd, Kingston Tel: (876) 208-3558 <u>instagram.com/patadisecateringndecor</u> Discount - 10%



#### Yaad Chef Consultancy

Online Store Tel: (876) 438-4192 <u>www.yaadchefconsultancy.com</u> Discount - 15%



DaVision Designz Online Store instagram.com/davisiondesignz Discount - 10%



#### Totally Male Club Spa & Salon 6 Windsor Ave, Kingston

Windsor Ave, Kingston Tel: (876) 946-2454 <u>totallymalespa.com</u>

Discount - 10%

If you would like to become a business partner of UCCAA, kindly send an email to uccalumnioffice@ucc.edu.jm

# UCCAA Business Partners

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#### Jamaica Turbo Repair Services

94 Hope Road, Unit 1 , Kingston 6 Tel: (876) 622-6299 jamaicaturbo.com Discount - 10%

### Be You(tiful) Creation

instagram.com/be.youtiful.creations

Discount - 5%



#### Segree's Day Spa

Shop 7 Wajo Plaza, Portmore, St. Catherine Tel: (876) 450-6430 IG: segreedayspa <u>fresha.com/a/segrees-day-spa-</u> <u>portmore-wajo-plaza-a20er9b5</u>

Discount - 5%

### How You Can Join Us

You can join by paying your membership fees:

Membership in the UCCAA will require payment of an annual fee of \$4,000JMD. This fee will entitle the alumni to discounted goods and services at select retailers island-wide. The UCCAA membership fee shall be reviewed per annum. 50% of UCCAA Membership Dues of only \$4,000/year are contributed directly to our Scholarship and 25% to our Community Outreach Programmes with the balance supporting our administration, networking and other activities.

Payment options available:

International Alumni members: Online using a debit or credit card Paypal: <u>https://forms.ucc.edu.jm/direct1/form/PayAlumniFee/formperma</u> <u>/-WHEfBiOJJXVbl4jN5XbgQ324KhJ-39Ks7\_TtKBXR8w</u>

Local Alumni members: Bank: Bank of Nova Scotia Account Type: Business - Chequing Branch Name/Number: New Kingston Branch / 50575 Account Number: 000952196 Branch Address: 2 Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston 5

Ensure to also complete the membership form below: <u>https://forms.gle/DFMX9B8yjWcrZde88</u>