

Statement by Honorable Minister for Education, Training,
Employment, Youth, Sports and Culture
Hon Alden McLaughlin JP
On the
University College of the Cayman Islands academic year
2008/2009:

Madam Speaker, I rise to update this Honorable House on the various initiatives underway at UCCI thru which we are addressing improvements to the administrative operations of the College as well as the new initiatives which mark the start of this academic year and; as I share them with this Honorable House these will give us all renewed confidence and hope as UCCI continues to build on its legacy of a solid academic standing - its trademark since its inception.

Madam Speaker, the past several months have presented with a number of challenges arising from the series of events surrounding the departure of the former president which unfolded just prior to the end of the last academic year.

In the face of these challenges, my Ministry and the Board of Governors of UCCI have worked closely together keeping our focus on the following:

- The tremendous accomplishments achieved at UCCI in the last couple of years
- The quality, dedication, and professionalism of the staff
- The momentum that the institution, has built and is committed to build on in the coming academic year
- The continued delivery of quality education programmes
- The continued development of new programmes and initiatives as dictated by the demonstrated human capital needs of the Cayman Islands

Madam Speaker the critical importance of this institution to Cayman's education system and the opportunities it affords to all our people despite the challenges, indeed because of them, gives us every reason to believe that UCCI will only grow from strength to strength as it fulfills its mandate as a prestigious tertiary institution in our region.

Madam Speaker I am pleased to report that the Board of Governors has taken a very aggressive stance in formalizing financial and administrative policies and procedures to such an extent that will ensure that issues which have in recent times given us all reason for grave concern in respect of the operations of the College will not recur.

At its most recent meeting last week the Board of Governors considered the following procedure by which any new policy is to be implemented at UCCI as follows

Any relevant party within the institution can recommend a new topic to be covered by institutional policy, either through their own initiative or at the request of a member of the management team and, an individual or group of individuals can formulate and draft a policy statement.

Once drafted, the policy statement would be required to be presented internally to the Council of Chairs – an internal advisory council made up of academic department heads that meets weekly during the academic year.

Once the Council of Chairs is satisfied that the proposed policy meets a need of the institution, it is presented to the President for consideration with subsequent presentation to the Board of Governors.

Only policies that are ratified by the Board at a regularly scheduled Board Meeting will be adopted as institutional policies and these will become binding on all parties within the institution.

Over the next 6 months, the overarching theme at UCCI will be one of refinement, and overall streamlining of programmes, projects, and operations.

During the coming months, all existing policies, both formal and ad hoc, will be streamlined, catalogued, centralized, and a policy manual for UCCI produced for formal acceptance by the Board of Governors. A concrete example of this is the recommendation now before the Board of Governors for the management of corporate credit cards.

Madam Speaker I fully support the Board of Governors in its efforts to not rest until we have tightened up every loop hole, formalized every policy and ensured that the necessary governance procedures are in place such that the Board can rest assured that only with their assent can any matter of significance take place at UCCI.

Without overlooking the importance of long term objectives, our focus right now must be on the immediate future. We foresee significant progress being made on the short and medium term goals of the institution by the end of the 2008 calendar year. January 2009 has been tentatively set as a target date for establishing long term goals in the form of a 3 - 5 year strategic plan for the institution. This I believe is a sensible and realistic approach which the Board has agreed to.

Madam Speaker moving on, I wish to speak to the range of academic programmes which the College has on offer and the improvements planned as well as the new academic programmes which will be introduced with the start of this new academic year.

We hope to build on the range of Academic Partnerships now in place. These are:

- Portfolio of the Civil Service (Civil Service College) – negotiations are underway with the Portfolio of the Civil Service for the continued operation of the Civil Service College. The parameters are being established so that a Service Level Agreement between the two organizations may be signed.
- Rotman School of Business (Certificate in Executive MBA Studies) – Last year’s successful partnership with the Rotman School of Business will continue this year. A new contract with Rotman will be executed in September 2008. The parameters are consistent with last year’s agreement.
- Department of Tourism (Tourism Apprenticeship Training Programme) – UCCI has reached an agreement with the Department of Tourism for the continued offering of the CaribCert tourism apprenticeship training programme.
- American Management Association (MHRM) – Last year’s partnership with the AMA will continue as an integral component of the Master’s in Human Resource Management.
- St. Matthew’s University (Pre-med) – UCCI’s has had lengthy discussions with SMU regarding a BSc in science that would suitably qualify a student for medical studies. SMU is very interested in working with UCCI in the development of the degree and facilitating medical studies scholarships for UCCI students. Negotiations are ongoing and management of the two institutions are looking at other potential synergies.
- Tony’s Toys (Automotive) – The IMI Automotive Technician Light Vehicle level 1 training is scheduled to begin September 10 in partnership with Tony’s Toys.
- Cayman Islands Investment Bureau (Business Consulting) – Work with CIIB continues as senior UCCI students get real life experience by consulting with investment bureau clients.

Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to conclude these comments by sharing the achievements of our graduates at the July 2008 graduation ceremony where some 199 students received their qualifications among 5 programme areas. To put this in perspective, I will provide the results for the 2007 graduating class made up of 154 students as follows:

Graduates:	2007	2008
Certificate	53	65
Associate	57	61
Bachelor	12	13
Dip. Ed.	-	20
Professional	32	40
Total	154	199

The 2007/2008 academic year had an enrollment of Fall semester 1377 students, Spring semester 1331 students and Summer semester 615 students.

Whilst the Fall 2008 semester registration is still underway numbers thus far indicate that they will be comparable to the same period last year.

Of note Madam Speaker is the Tourism Apprenticeship Training Programme, sponsored by Department of Tourism. This programme had 20 apprentices last year, with an increase to 34 apprentices this year.

Turning to the Cayman Brac UCCI Campus which opened its doors in January 2008 Madam Speaker, I am pleased to advise that Spring 2008 semester when the Civil Service College classes started, 44 students enrolled.

Summer 2008, UCCI launched the first Associate Degree classes with 7 students, and there were 10 students in the Civil Service College.

With the start of this new academic year the full range of Associate Degree classes are being offered on this campus – 19 classes (13 by video link, 6 by live instruction).

The Civil Service classes will continue as well and these offerings are being finalized as I speak along with evening Continuing Education classes.

As of last week some 40 students registered for the UCCI Fall semester on this campus and registration continues.

Madam Speaker I am pleased to make this report on the current status of operations at UCCI. Whilst there have been challenges over the past academic year I am pleased to report that we have taken them on in stride and sought to move the College forward in a variety of ways.

These developments, Madam Speaker speak to brighter futures for all of us in many ways as my Ministry and the Board of Governors of UCCI work closely together with determination in ensuring that the people of these islands are provided with a high quality tertiary education product.

This Madam Speaker demonstrates my overall commitment to transforming education at every level. I will continue to deliver on this promise.

Madam Speaker we were thrown curve balls in early Spring of this year, Despite the curve balls, despite disappointments from time to time and despite opposition I will continue to deliver on this promise.

Thank You Madam Speaker.