

University of Technology, Jamaica

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION AT UTECH, JAMAICA

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 1

CO-OP ED vs COVID-19

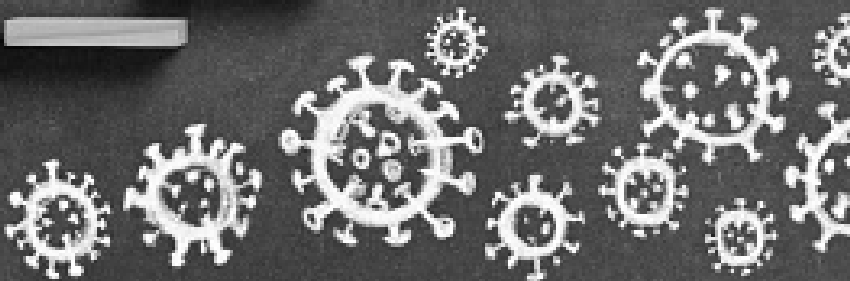


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NAVIGATING NEW HORIZONS WITH WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

The World Association of Co-operative Education (WACE) held a virtual world conference May 11-13, 2021 under the theme, "Navigating New Horizons." The conference was convened by professionals and associates, in association with the University of Waterloo and focused on work-integrated learning (WIL) and its important role in the world of work. The higher education sector is facing unprecedented challenges in the way it teaches, researches, and engages with stakeholders. While COVID-19 began to spread across each country, more and more organizations including universities have responded by adjusting their products, services or operational approaches. Over the three-day period, the conference organizers utilised a blended approach to deliver the conference; synchronous (live) sessions and asynchronous (pre-recorded) sessions were used. The presenters shared research to support prominent ideas on how to navigate the compulsory change in society due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The role of WACE is to bring about work-integrated learning for students and encourage student employability through industry engaged programs. (Cont'd page 2)

FROM THE DESK OF THE CO-OP ED COORDINATOR

The year 2021 has ended on a positive note. We were able to facilitate the placement of our students in a variety of formats, namely physical, blended and virtual placements. Many thanks to our Industry Partners who continued to make it possible for our students to get much-needed work experience in their respective areas of study. For those who were unable to accommodate our students this time around, we look forward to having you partner with us again in the near future.

I wish to acknowledge the efforts of our School Coordinators who utilized every means possible, including alternative means of assessment, to ensure that their students were given an opportunity to engage in the Co-op Ed experience and fulfil their module requirements for graduation.

In March, we launched our first virtual Co-operative Education Fair in collaboration with the Career and Placement Unit. Our students got the opportunity to benefit from professional development workshops as well as to be interviewed for internship prospects in a conference-like setting. Among other highlights of the period was our annual Professional Development Workshop which was held in November and was aptly themed, "Demonstrating Professionalism with the Virtual Environment". The students were very grateful for the insights shared by the eloquent Sharon Williams of NCB.

The year 2022 will bring its own unique challenges and opportunities for change. The Unit remains ready to pivot and adjust accordingly. Change in any organisation is imminent, therefore, we seek to develop and extend current strategies to continue to develop the world and work-ready graduates. To our most important stakeholders, our students, I say, take advantage of the various opportunities for professional development and work hard to make a lasting, positive impression on prospective employers.



**Mrs. Sandy Lawrence ,
Acting Co-operative Education Coordinator**

NAVIGATING NEW HORIZONS... CONT'D

One of the main presentations was entitled, "Responding to COVID-19: Enriching students' responsible leadership through an online work-integrated learning project." This was presented by Dr Laura Rock. In the presentation, she stated that WIL is an umbrella term for a range of approaches that aim to connect the theory and practice of work within the curriculum. There are several variables that can be considered when classifying WIL activities. These may include the location (on or off campus), length of the activity (placement hours), whether academic credit is given for participation, the extent of community or industry engagement, or the purpose of the activity. Also, in her presentation, she stated that "In addition to these operational challenges, some scholars and experts are predicting that COVID-19 will have a negative effect on the mental and psychological health of students and university staff."

Dr Rock in her final remarks highlighted that from her study, she recognized that COVID-19 was changing both people's way of life and students' motivation. It was challenging our work-life balance with many people working from home and for many students. She, therefore, concluded that a new approach was needed, one that is founded on the principles of a student-centred approach, connectivism and building a community of inquiry.

I ROSE, SO CAN YOU



Aneka Frazer
School of Business Administration

"I had a great experience overall and I made the best use of my time while on internship. I learned new things every day. It is my first time experiencing a pandemic, and to get the opportunity to be able to work in the field has given me insight into how decision-making affects businesses and how change can impact organizations. I also enjoyed working with my colleagues at the time and the work environment was friendly, motivating, and professional." So said Aneka Frazer, who was placed at the Jamaica Conservation Development Trust. The novel Coronavirus wreaked havoc on the professional landscape during the last two years. Aneka was paranoid about being placed in a physical context in the middle of a pandemic.

She had been quarantined for more than a year and going out to work opened the possibilities of contracting and infecting her family with the virus.

However, with all the fears aside, Aneka decided that she wanted to complete her internship, and she did complete it.

"While fulfilling my role as such, I have learned a lot while being there for only one month. I was able to properly utilize the QuickBooks software, use the Tax Administration Jamaica website to perform job functions and prepare purchase orders."

Aneka will use the experience gained to propel herself in the world of work. She is determined to use her skills to also give back and help other, upcoming students where necessary.

Aneka's recommendations

- Learn new things each day
- Propel yourself with experience gained
- Give back
- Use your skills wisely

I ROSE, SO CAN YOU

CHANTEL GREEN SCHOOL OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Chantel stated, "I was fortunate enough to be placed in my field of study, so I had hands-on experience with what I will be doing in the future. I was assisted and received in-depth training in human resources, talent management and workforce training. Every day there was something new to learn and something more to develop from what I was being trained in. It was great to attend meetings and experience a real workplace and work with people from different departments. This opened my eyes to what collaboration means, just like the Co-operative Education Unit at UTech, Ja. It also allowed me to see what it means to have a great work ethic.

My overall experience was 10/10. I looked forward to going to work every day to learn new things. My days were fruitful, as I was trained to perfection. However, I must say that I was a bit scared to be placed in the middle of a pandemic. COVID-19 is no joke with the high infection rate. I was determined not to contract the virus.

It was a great experience and all Covid 19 protocols were observed. The majority of the staff worked from home so everybody had enough space and resources to complete their daily tasks. Though I was worried, I had the satisfaction of knowing that it was a safe environment. I would gladly do it again. Thank you to the team of the Co-operative Education Unit for an opportunity of a lifetime".



Chantel's recommendations:

- Get up, wake up, show up.
- Be on time
- Learn as much as you can
- Set goals
- Complete daily tasks timely
- Leave a mark

I ROSE, SO CAN YOU



CHRISHAWNY CAMPBELL SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

"Covid 19 has taught me that anything is possible, we just must be creative and innovative. Thinking outside the box and creating solutions for myself was the best thing that happened to me while in the middle of the pandemic. It took some time for me to adapt to the new world, or should I say the new operating world? The pandemic was difficult at first. But my work experience coordinator made it so seamless, that I sometimes didn't even realize that I was working. " Chrishawny was placed at the Management Institute for National Development.

I was scared because of COVID-19, however, the department in which I was placed ensured that all protocols were being followed. With the hands-on experience afforded to me, I was able to learn about software like Quickbooks, and how to manage people, create organizational structure, write policies and give account for human talent.

Now that I understand the world of work, I will use the experience gained from my internship to my advantage. I will also ensure that I was my going next job opportunity will be met with the training I received.

Chrishawny's recommendations

- Be courteous
- Have fun
- Ask questions, lots of them
- Manage your time wisely
- Be nice

CO-OP ED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR- "DEMONSTRATING PROFESSIONALISM WITHIN THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT"

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges that have extended beyond the personal and have managed to impact the professional sphere. As a result, there has had to be re-imagination of the work environment, with health and safety being of paramount importance. In light of this, the Co-op Ed Unit hosted its fifth annual Professional Development seminar, under the theme "Demonstrating Professionalism within the Virtual Environment". Miss Sharon Williams, the guest presenter, shared valuable insights with our students regarding ways in which they can serve with excellence in the digital world.

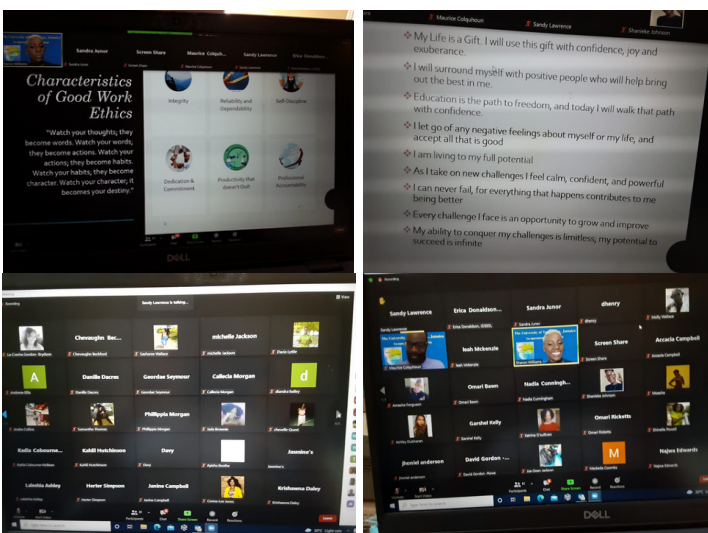
She posited many ideas to the audience on how to successfully navigate the new professional normal. From her presentation, Williams highlighted the importance of positioning oneself within the digital sphere through the discussion of varying topics. Williams believes that there are six important characteristics one must have to succeed in the digital environment, namely, 'tech-saviness', 'succinctness', 'problem-solving', 'empathy', 'knowledge' and 'communication'. In discussing the points, she was keen to illustrate their importance not only in the digital realm but also within the context of everyday life.



Miss Sharon Williams, Head, Group Client Experience, National Commercial Bank

As she spoke with the group of soon-to-be university graduates who look forward to becoming professionals, she emphasized the importance of creating one "personal brand". In doing so, not only are you able to stand out from the competition, you are able to be synonymous with your core values and beliefs. According to Williams, the aforementioned, among many others, represent ways to ensure excellent service is not only provided but maintained.

Williams left the group with chosen words of wisdom, that by her own admission, should assist them significantly in being their best selves as they venture into the unknown of corporate society. She implored those in attendance to avoid negative spaces and to take responsibility for their actions. She ended her presentation by advising participants to find inspiration through the success of others and look to God for guidance.



Photos from the Co-operative Education Professional Development Seminar with Miss Sharon Williams

ENGINEERING STUDENTS COP INTERNATIONAL AWARDS FOR UNDERGRADUATE CO-OP ED PROJECTS

In response to some of the challenges associated with the Covid 19 pandemic, the School of Engineering (SOE) took on the challenge to develop the first proposal for an Alternative Assessment Framework. This was designed to facilitate an alternative option for the Industrial Work Experience (IWE) programme and especially for final year students. The initiative was led by the then School IWE Coordinator with strong support from the SOE Management team and the Co-operative Education Unit.



In Summer 2020, Ms Paula Henry, Senior Lecturer in the Chemical Engineering Division, Dr Therese Chambers former SOE Head and Mr Percival Stewart, Civil Engineering Programme Director developed the first virtual design project under the leadership of the SOE IWE Coordinator. This initial idea was further expanded during the summer of the 2021 project implementation to incorporate smart lighting features and was designed for persons with physical challenges. The complexities of this and other projects required students and supervisors from diverse engineering disciplines. The project scope and deliverables covered content from at least two different courses of study. The selection of participants was drawn from a combination of engineering disciplines: chemical, civil, electrical, industrial, and mechanical.

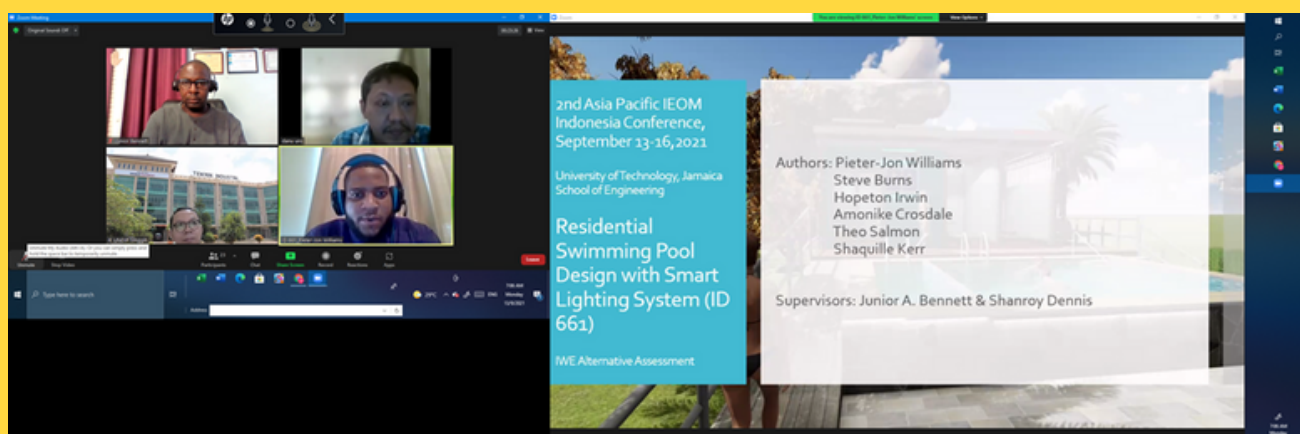
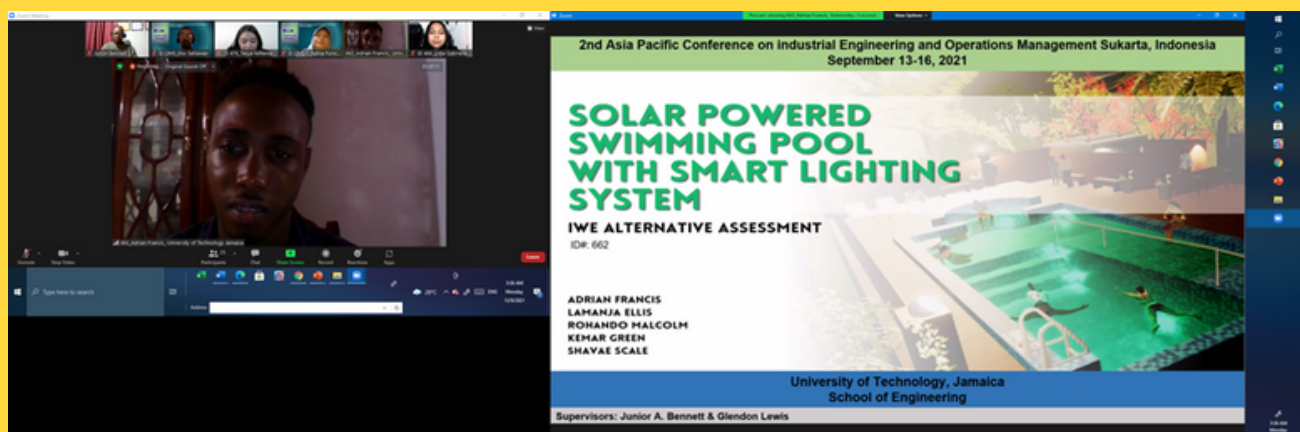
Over six project teams participated in the SOE Industrial Work Experience (IWE) Alternative Assessment projects during summer 2021. Two top projects were selected to participate in the Industrial Engineering and Operation Management (IEOM) Society International conference held virtually in Indonesia from September 13 - 16, 2021. The two teams entered in the selected undergraduate competition categories did remarkably well, copping the first and third place awards.

The recipient of the 1st Place Award was selected from a group of 30 entries in the Undergraduate Student Paper Competition Sponsored by the SIEMENS project entitled "Solar Powered Swimming Pool with Smart Lighting System". During the competition, Mr Adrian Francis ably led the presentation and responded succinctly to questions from the judges confidently and remarkably. The other team members were Shavae Scale (team leader), Rohando Malcolm, Lamanja Ellis and Kemar Green. The team was supervised by Mr Glendon Lewis and Mr Junior Bennett, both lecturers in SOE.

The 3rd Place Award recipient was chosen from a total of 14 entries in the Undergraduate Research Competition project entitled "Residential Swimming Pool Design with Smart Lighting System". Mr Pieter-Jon Williams team leader ably led the presentation and responded well to questions from the judges. The team was supervised by Mr Shanroy Dennis and Mr Junior Bennett, both lecturers in SOE.

The presenters Mr Adrian Francis and Mr Pieter-Jon Williams strategically incorporated the lessons learnt during their studies and preparation session and made history for UTech Ja and Jamaica. We are proud of the achievements and ambassadorship of the students from the School of Engineering. Their success is primarily due to their ambition, hard work, teamwork, commitment, and persistence. In addition, the supervision from devoted staff, strong support from SOE Management and the Cooperative Education Unit have all contributed to this international achievement. Today, we are all proud of the eminence attained and the ambassadorship. The success that we now enjoy adds credence to Helen Keller's words, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much".

Contributed by Junior Bennett, Former Co-op Ed (IWE) Coordinator, SOE



Photos from the Industrial Engineering and Operation Management (IEOM) Society International conference

CO-OP ED FEATURES

RETHINKING WHAT IS POSSIBLE



**Mrs Naheel Brown Legister – Former Co-operative Education Coordinator –
Caribbean School of Sport Sciences**

Mastering her role as Co-op Ed School Coordinator, Mrs Brown Legister, covered the end-to-end process for internship in the Caribbean School of Sport Sciences. These included but were not limited to relaying information from the Co-operative Education Unit to students and partners, coordinating professional development workshops for students, contacting potential partners and sending packages upon confirmation of participation, informing students of their assigned hosts for the internship, conducting site visits with partners, analyzing feedback and preparing reports based on students' experiences.

When asked about the changes made during her stint as Coordinator, she modestly stated, "I would not credit anything I have done with the term change. I would instead say that it has been a process. I have had to learn about cooperative education and with learning comes improvement. What we have now is an improvement from where we started."

Mrs Brown Legister made mentioned that COVID-19 had put a damper on her operations, as her school deals with physical sports. With no sports available due to social distancing mandates by the government, she had to rethink her process. While she didn't go into specifics, she stated that her internship partners made efforts to design work plans and report schedules for the interns. Designing such work plans were key to adapting to innovation in her eyes.

She exclaimed that the opportunity this position has granted her is a rewarding one, stating, "I feel like a proud mom when you hear the feedback of the student's performance on the job. It is also very satisfying when your students are offered employment upon completing their hours." She also stated that the partnerships formed with clients have become stronger due to the level of work her interns have produced.

In her final remarks, she recommended that the module be paid for by the university as it aids in professional development. She stated that this move would be good and would also be an appropriate introduction for students who will be pursuing the module in the future.

CO-OP ED FEATURES

CO-OP ED CHAMPIONS - MISS SANDRA JUNOR AND MRS. SANDY LAWRENCE

Tasked with forming work-ready graduates for the 21st-century world of work, Miss Sandra Junor and Mrs Sandy Lawrence are the go-to persons for work-integrated learning. They assist in placing students within organizations so that upon completion they will sharpen their skills in their respective areas of study as well as problem-solving, networking, negotiating, and managing complex processes. With transformative mindsets, both Miss Junor and Mrs Lawrence have worked tirelessly to have the Co-operative Education programme innovate in a global pandemic. They have moved from challenge to triumph over the last two years. Here is a deeper look into their respective roles and responsibilities.



Miss Sandra Junor, Administrative Assistant 1, Co-operative Education Unit

1: What is your specified role in the department?

Ans: I am the Administrative Assistant for the Co-operative Education Unit.

2: How long have you been working in your role and overall, in the department?

Ans: I have been assigned to the Co-operative Education Unit since 2007.

3: What has been your greatest accomplishment/ achievement, since assuming the current role you are in?

Ans: I have accomplished several things. I have been involved in guiding the operational and strategic process for the Co-operative Education Unit. I have also accomplished strong working relationships with industry partners, assisted in establishing workforce planning initiatives and provided guidance on our students' professional growth and development. I have also grown and developed as a strong and competent member of staff.

4. What changes have you initiated since assuming the role?

Ans: I have assisted with the changes to streamline and strengthen the modus operandi of the Co-operative Education programme.

CO-OP ED CHAMPIONS - MISS SANDRA JUNOR AND MRS. SANDY LAWRENCE CONT'D



Mrs Sandy Lawrence, Acting Co-operative Education Coordinator for the Co-operative Education Unit.

1: What is your specified role in the department?

Ans: I am the Acting Co-operative Education Coordinator for the Co-operative Education Unit.

2: How long have you been working in your role and overall, in the department?

Ans: I assumed responsibility for oversight of the Unit in November 2020.

3: What has been your greatest accomplishment/ achievement, since assuming the current role you are in?

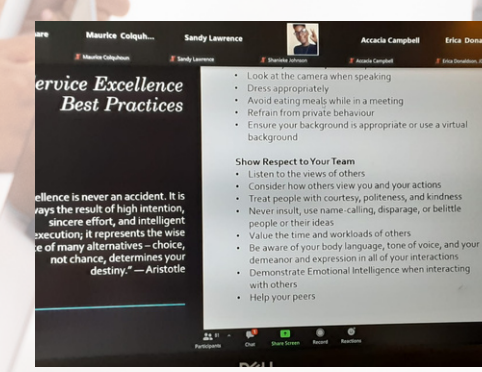
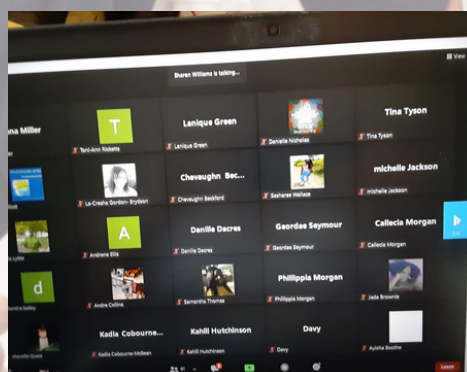
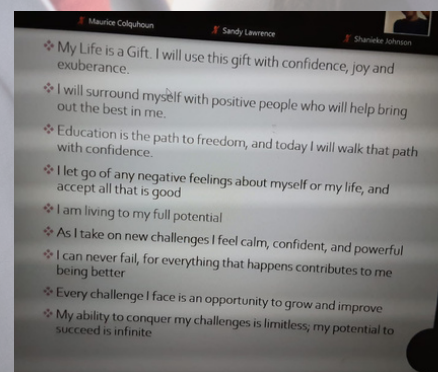
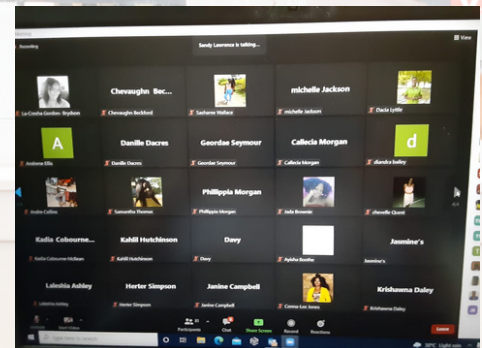
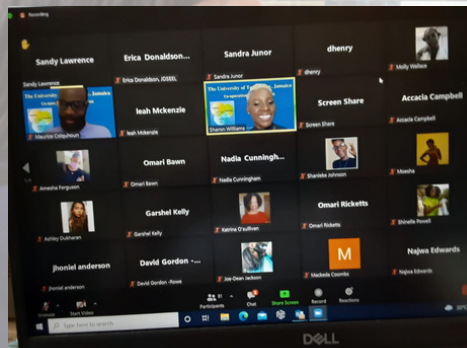
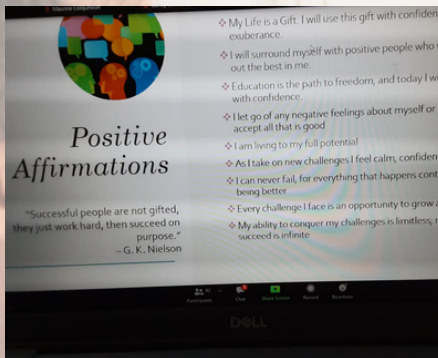
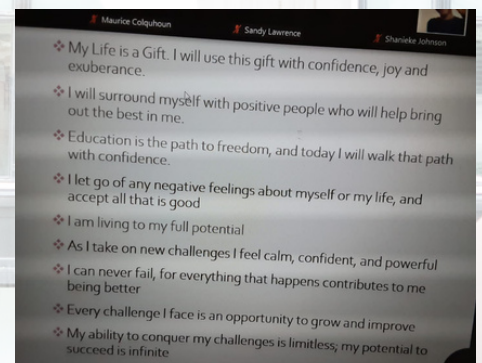
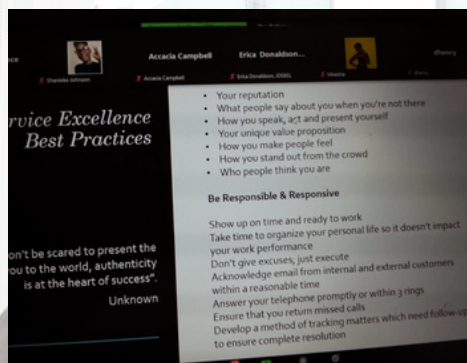
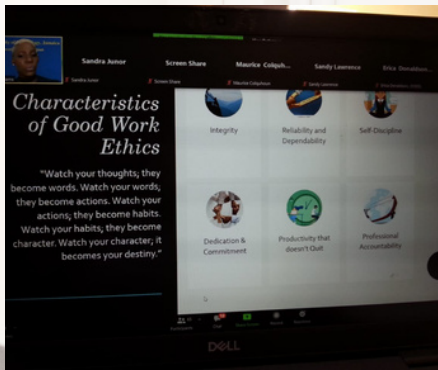
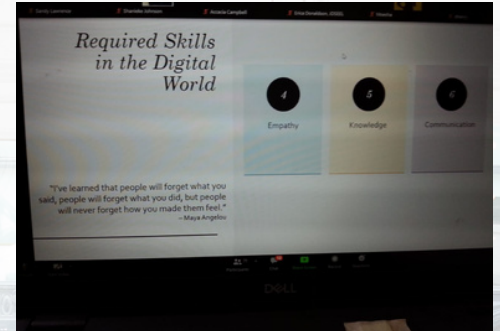
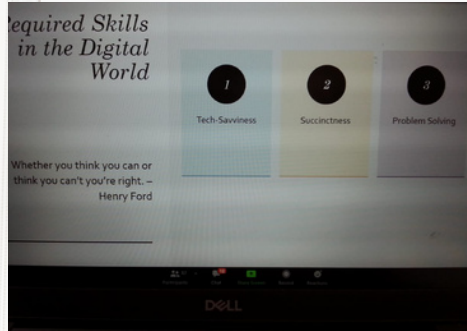
Ans: Among my most notable achievements is improved collaboration with the Career and Placement Unit as we seek to facilitate internship and permanent placement opportunities for our students and recent graduates. I have also coordinated the efforts of the Unit in ensuring meaningful participation in the Career and Job Placement Fair, held in March 2021.

4. What changes have you initiated since assuming the role?

Ans: I have sought to strengthen the operations of the Unit concerning its dealings with various stakeholders, namely, industry partners and School Coordinators in a bid to ensure that our students are adequately prepared for the world of work.

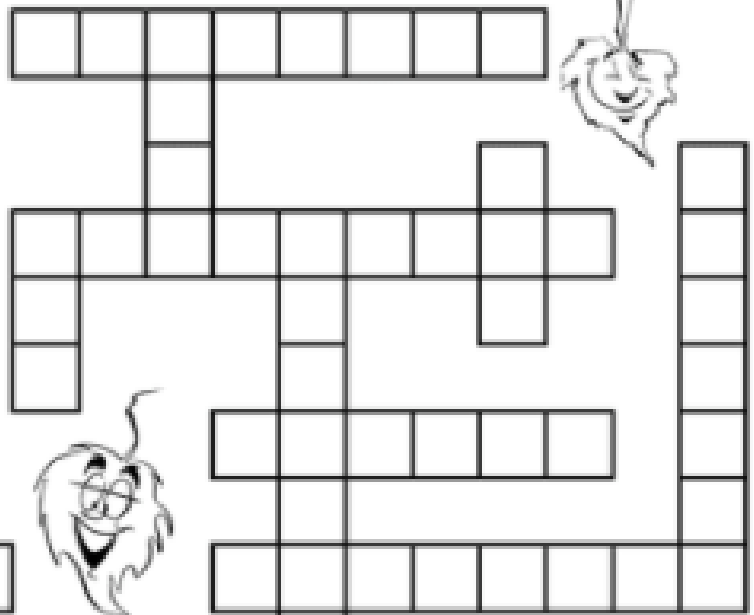
Within their specific roles, these two ladies have demonstrated that they can make changes, adjust and forged great partnerships. Miss Junor and Mrs Lawrence are committed to producing work-ready graduates that will demonstrate skill in their respective areas of specialization.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS FROM THE CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR



CHILL CORNER

AUTUMN



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3 letters

- hay
- owl
- pie
- red

4 letters

- cool
- corn
- maze
- pear
- rake

5 letters

- cider
- crisp
- quilt
- socks
- spice
- trees

6 letters

- apples
- autumn
- colors
- leaves
- orange
- school
- season
- yellow

7 letters

- falling
- harvest
- pumpkin
- sweater

11 letters

- wheelbarrow

8 letters

- chipmunk
- mushroom
- orchards
- rustling

9 letters

- chestnuts
- deciduous
- pinecones

ABOUT THE STUDENT EDITOR



DERRAINE BEPAT, 4TH YEAR COMMUNICATION ART AND TECHNOLOGY STUDENT

A future Crisis Manager and digital marketing strategist, Derraine currently majors in public relations and journalism, and in his spare time, he writes blogs on men's health. Derraine has also worked as guest relations and guest engagement specialist, with a concentration on dealing with complaints in the hospitality industry. In a few years, Derraine plans to transition into roles that will push him towards his dream jobs of owning a digital marketing or crisis management company and being the vice president of marketing and corporate communications at Nike.

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