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The University of the West Indies Open Campus and the Jamaica Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Forge Partnership to Transform Academic and Business Opportunities for Women

Building Alliances to Strengthen Access to Education for Single Mothers in Jamaica

Montego Bay, JAMAICA, May 24, 2021– The University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus and the Jamaica Alumnae Chapter (JAC) of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated announce a partnership that will support students who are single mothers as well as programs to strengthen the professional development of alumna and advancing students.

The partnership seeks to support the primary demographic of UWI Open Campus students who are single mothers striving to complete their on-line education while often working in the tourism and business process outsourcing (BPO) industry. Committed to yielding tangible results that make a life-changing impact, the partnership is kicking off their collaboration with a fundraiser sponsored by the Jamaica Alumnae Chapter to raise USD 10,000 to support a one-year scholarship for a UWI Open Campus student.

"Raising children while pursuing your education is a challenge that a unique group of women understands," Jewel Daniels Radford, President, Jamaica Alumnae Chapter said. "We saw this as a perfect opportunity to reflect the work of our global organization (Delta Sigma Theta), which is an extension of the work we do here as the Jamaica Alumnae Chapter. The fundraiser is just the beginning of our exciting plans to create game-changing opportunities in partnership with UWI Open Campus."

Indeed this is true.

JAC members will also serve as mentors, guest lecturers and participate in UWI Open Campus Alumni Association programs. For example, on June 10, 2021, Daniels Radford will be the guest speaker at the University's Soft and Life Skills Series (SLSS), presenting on *NETworking for Women: Secrets to Seeing the Glass Door and Shattering the Glass Ceiling*.

The UWI Open Campus Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor Dr. Luz Longworth describes the alliance as an incredible way to meet the needs of students while also elevating the understanding of the Sorority's mission.

Dr. Longworth shared that we (UWI Open Campus) are proud to work with the Jamaica Alumnae Chapter of Delta because of its over 100-year history of college-educated Black women committed to educational advance and community service as part of their global platform.

“As women and girls in Jamaica continue to be at risk, our two organizations are pleased to join forces in engaging three groups within the UWI Open Campus family; alumni, students preparing to graduate, and students who are heavily engaged in the community serving as advocates for the university,” Dr. Longworth said. “This is an exciting and innovative partnership that will grow from strength to strength because of our mutually shared objectives.”

In addition to the UWI Open Campus alumni initiatives, the alliance has created JAC4STAT and Delta Love the Guild, which will offer programs and events for college students. In addition, plans are underway for an international exchange student cooperative that will link those interested in studying abroad with a "soft landing" representative of the Sorority currently enrolled or a graduate of the targeted college. More information will be available at the Fall JAC/UWI College Fair.

The University of the West Indies is the Caribbean's top university, renowned for world-class higher education, internationally recognized accredited degrees, and research. In 2020, UWI achieved "Triple Firsts," with Times Higher Education (THE) ranking in the top 1% of universities in the Latin American and Caribbean region and Golden Age universities while also holding its position as the only Caribbean university to be ranked.

The UWI Open Campus is simultaneously a virtual campus with nearly 50 physical site locations in 17 English-speaking Caribbean countries. Both Dr. Longworth and Daniels Radford see the alliance as having plenty of room for growth to sustain over the years especially given Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's expansive 1,061 chapters. Since its founding in 1913, Delta's membership has grown to over 300,000 with a focus to affect the most significant impact within its Five-Point Programmatic Thrust:

1. Educational Development
2. Economic Development
3. International Awareness and Involvement
4. Physical and Mental Health
5. Political Awareness and Involvement

The Jamaica Alumnae Chapter was formed in 2004 by 11 Jamaican women aligned with the mission and vision of the organization. The current 15 members of JAC conduct community service programs, offer academic scholarships, and support organizations that include Eve for Life, Cambridge Basic School, Food for the Poor, Mary's Child, the Montego Bay Home for Girls, St. Judes, and others. For more information, please visit www.dstjac.com or email: dstjamaica@gmail.com

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