



UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE 2000-2025



UB TAKING ITS PLACE





THE UB VISION

The University of Belize aims to be regionally accredited and globally recognized as the premier, responsive, innovative and sustainable degree-granting university that fosters excellence in teaching, research and service that drives national development.

THE UB MISSION

As the national university, the University of Belize commits to delivering excellence in higher education, service and research for national development to its students and other stakeholders. With the highest level of qualified and experienced faculty and staff and current technology, the University provides access to the most relevant and affordable human resource development programs based on academic freedom, equity and transparency.

UB: CORE VALUES

These values underpin the University's culture and its four strategic pillars as reflected in the RISE 2023-2027 Strategic Plan: Responsive-Innovative-Sustainable-Excellence

- Responsive to National Needs
- Student-Centered
- Innovation and Empowerment
- Sustainability and Future Orientated
- Excellence and Merit
- Spirit of Inquiry and Academic Freedom
- Inclusion
- Diversity and Equitable Access
- Accountability and Transparency

THE MATURING YEARS
THE ACCELERATING YEARS
THE MAINTAINING YEARS
THE SUSTAINING YEARS
THE STRATEGIZING YEARS
THE TUMULTUOUS YEARS
THE TRANSITIONAL YEARS



“Congratulations to the University of Belize on its 25th anniversary. It’s a big milestone for us, as we continue to shape young minds through research, teaching, service and innovation. Congratulations, UB!”

-Dr. Arleni Rogers, UB Asst. Professor in the Natural Resource Management (NRM) Program (2010-Present); UB lecturer (2004 -2006); UCB alum (1999) and UB alum (2000).

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Mr. Arnulfo Kantun- Business Development Officer
 Ms. Gianni Lewis- Project Assistant
 Mrs. Maria Urbina- Secretary
 Mr. Egbert Irvin, Director, UB's Institutional Advancement Office (IAO)
 IAO spearheaded this magazine's development.

Welcome to the readers of this commemorative magazine. It celebrates the 25th anniversary of Belize's national university, the University of Belize. This magazine's purpose is three-fold:

- To celebrate the evolution of UB
- To reflect on UB's role in Belizean society
- To portray UB's vision for continued leadership in Belize's development

We celebrate UB's legacy institutions: Belize Technical College (BTC), Belize Teachers [Training] College (BTTC), Belize [Bliss] School of Nursing (BSN), Belize College of Agriculture (BCA) and University College of Belize (UCB). We also give tribute to the Belize College of Arts, Science and Technology (BELCAST)—what two former UB presidents note as the genesis of university culture in Belize. Equally, we pay tribute to our students, alumni, faculty, staff, administration, partners, community and organizational stakeholders, and regional and international partners. Above all, we celebrate UB's 18,000+ graduates over the 25 years and their contribution to national development.

HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE IN SUMMARY

On August 1, 2000, the University of Belize (UB) was born from the merger of the five above-listed institutions. Three of these—UCB, BTC and BTTC—were under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (MOE); BSN was under the supervision of the Ministry of Health (MOH), and BCA was under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA).

A similar merger of some of the same tertiary level institutions was implemented with the establishment of BELCAST; however, after a change in government and philosophy, UCB was created in 1986 to replace BELCAST. In 1998, in another philosophical and governmental move that felt a consolidation of resources was again necessary, the five aforementioned institutions were on the road to being amalgamated and forming the University of Belize. UB, as well as all tertiary level institutions, are now under MOE supervision auspices.

Initially, UB offered programs from the location of the five former institutions; however, in 2004, the main campus was officially moved to Belmopan City. UB now offers programs from its main campus in Belmopan, from three locations on its Belize City campus, from its Central Farm campus, and from its southern campus in Punta Gorda. UB also owns and manages two marine field stations at Calabash and Hunting Cayes. It also offers online courses in several of its associate, bachelor and master degree programs, as well as short certificate courses through its Open and Distance Learning (ODL) platforms.

It was indeed a pleasure leading the UB team that put together this commemorative magazine. UB at 25 is TAKING ITS PLACE. We especially celebrate our students, alumni, faculty, staff, Unit Heads, Deans, Chairs, Directors, Administrators, Board members, partners and stakeholders: Congratulations to all!

THE LEGACY INSTITUTIONS AT A GLANCE

“The five institutions that created the University of Belize brought their history with them into the University, and that was more than sufficient history to put the University of Belize on the road to being able to have a medical school.”

-Dr. Lisa Johnson, Dean of UB’s School of Medicine



Belize Technical College Est. 1952



Belize [Bliss] School of Nursing Est. 1963



Belize College of Agriculture Est. 1986
forerunner 1977



Belize Teachers [Training] College Est. 1965



University College of Belize Est. 1986



University of Belize: Established 2000

“Whenever you bring together five separate institutions, it will take a while for them to mesh. And I must say that we have gotten over most of that hump. One of the things from history, if you look at the University of the West Indies – they just celebrated their 75th anniversary - they will tell you they went through the same growing pains that we are going through now at 25 years it’s a natural occurrence when institutions are formed – for them to go through a transition period. And, we came together, we put our differences aside, and we worked toward the Mission and Vision of the University of Belize. That is our guiding light. And over the years, we have continued to push at the mission and vision in our strategic plans, and we were able to accomplish a lot of things over these 25 years.”

- Dr. Bernard Watler, 2025: Dean of FMSS; 2000: UB Lecturer; 1999: On UB Transition Team and UCB lecturer; 1989: Alum of Belize Technical College.



HONORING THE LEGACY OF BELIZE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Established 1952

It began as the Technical High School, fully government owned, a direct response to the felt need after WWII for Belizeans to have skills and technical knowledge: traditional literacy subjects, math, natural science, technical drawing, domestic science, woodwork and metal work, with building added in 1958.

The fact that the Technical High School was even established in 1952 was itself an accomplishment in that time of British colonial rule and the emerging nationalist movement in Belize. As one of Belize's leading historians Dr. Angel Cal noted in an interview for this magazine: "This is quite the pattern, one of the consequences, of British colonialism; the British didn't see it fit to establish educational institutions. They were not keen even on a high school; for example, when the BTC was being planned, they questioned the need for a technical college for a woodcutting society with no need for a high school." Despite this, Belize — then British Honduras — established what UB looks on today as a sterling legacy institution. Intakes at BTC's first years included students directly matriculating from primary school.



In 1972, it converted fully into a technical college, accepting students directly from junior secondary and secondary schools. In August-September 1990, BTC converted to a full post-secondary institution with craft level certifications and diplomas. By now, incoming students had to have a high school degree or equivalent certification, with options for mature students. Students could also sit external exams: the British GCE exams; its RSA exams (in shorthand, typewriting, and bookkeeping); the Ordinary Technician Diploma (OTD); and certification from the City and Guilds of London. BTC was, in fact, a force to be reckoned with, impacting Belizean society and helping to meet the line technicians, mechanics, electrical technicians and such needs of the country. In 1990 through to its amalgamation into UB in 2000, four departments existed (General Studies, Business Studies, Engineering and Building departments) through which students earned an associate's degree.

THE BTC CULTURE: STILL A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

ANNUAL BTC VARIETY SHOW

Both Dr. Lisa Johnson, a BTC 1983 alum and current Dean of UB's School of Medicine, and Jackie Noralez {a UCB 1992 alum coming from Belize Technical College, a 2003 UB alum who is a senior UB Records and Registration assistant today} recall fondly the excitement and impact of the annual BTC Variety Show—it was a much anticipated annual event, capturing the hearts and support of the Belize City community especially at a time when no television on transmission existed and radio ruled. To this day, Ms. Noralez proudly has three BTC badges in her desk at UB's Records Office, still in pristine condition, still in their protective wraps.

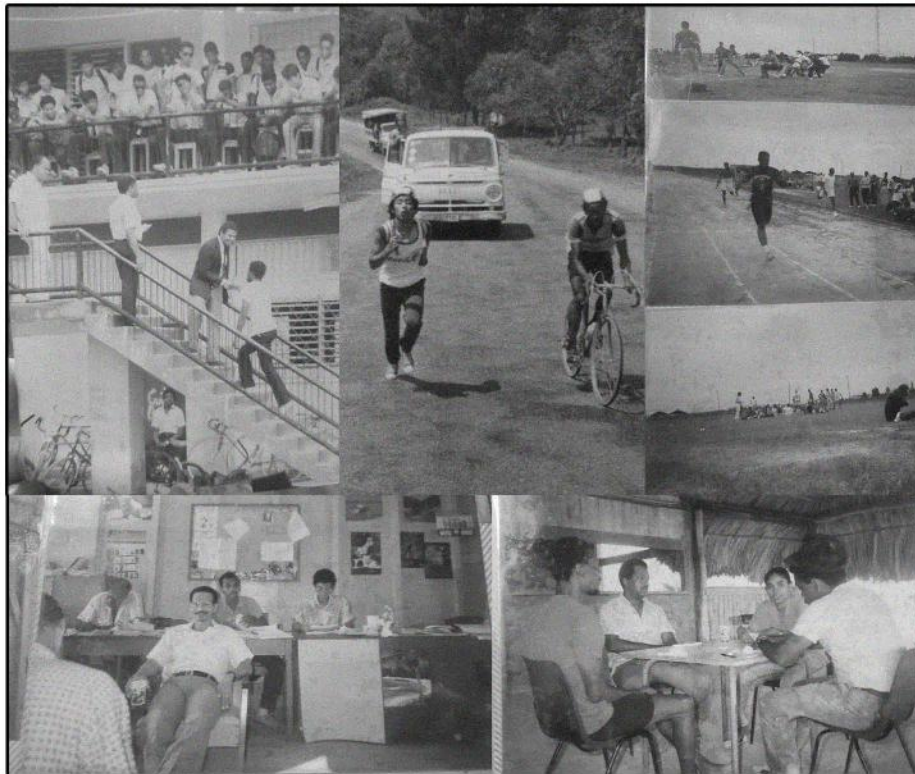




THE ANNUAL BTC RELATHON

Today, the BTC Relathon that this institution started continues at UB, with the May 2025 Relathon seeing students cheering on their classmates and teachers as they relayed along parts of the George Price Highway between Belize City and UB, Belmopan. In the picture (Far L) 2017: a past relathon with then Chief Public Safety Officer Mr. Jerome Ellis with torch (L) 2012 UB Relathon.

Moreover, there is a Facebook page for Belize Technical College, with gems of photographic memories and as of mid-2025, 1.9 thousand (1.9K) public followers. The following screenshot from BTC's Facebook attests to the ever enduring BTC loyalty.



Today, the BTC campus on Freetown Road, now upgraded and the home to one of the Ministry of Education's biggest ITVET centers, also serves as offices, classrooms and labs for some of UB Faculty of Science and Technology's Belize City-based offerings.



HONORING THE LEGACY OF BELIZE TEACHERS COLLEGE

Established 1965

Teaching began in Belize with a Pupil-Teacher Training System—a program for preparing acceptable primary school graduates to teach in primary schools that, largely, were established by religious missionaries. Although the 1892 Education Ordinance mentions scholarships for primary school graduates, it took 50 years to be implemented, with a few teachers being sent to Jamaica and the USA for training. In the late 1940s, the 1887-founded St John's College opened a teacher-preparedness program, initiated by Fr. John Knopp, that became in 1954 the St. John's Teacher Training College. One attendee, Mr. Inez Sanchez, became the country's Chief Education Officer in later years. Similarly, the government also operated another in 1954, the St. George's Training College. By 1902, The Catholic, Wesley and Anglican missionaries had established five secondary schools with some 300 students total as noted in the 1915 education report, by 1947, Belize City alone registered 226 secondary students; by 1988 Belize had 25 secondary schools.

BELIZE TEACHERS TRAINING COLLEGE BEGINS

Prior to the introduction of teacher training institutions in Belize, teacher training involved a 20-week course for First and Second-Class Teachers examinations. In 1965, St. John's Teacher Training College and St. George's College merged to form the Belize Teachers College, which survived natural disasters like Hurricane Hattie. That same year, Belize joined the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) with Jamaica and the Bahamas to certify teachers. Belize remained a JBTE member until the Belize Teachers College amalgamated with other institutions to form UB in 2000.

Although the name of the merged institutions changed to Belize Teachers College, Belize Teachers Training College (B TTC) was often used to avoid confusion with BTC for Belize Technical College. Initially, B TTC offered content and professional education courses for in-service teachers, leading to a trained teacher certificate for primary school teachers and a diploma for secondary school teachers. The program for primary school teachers, then known as the Two Plus One program, involved two years of intramural course work with two practice teaching segments, followed by a year of internship. In the internship year, students also had to complete a research paper on an education-related topic. The program for secondary school teachers was a 3-year intramural program of content and professional education courses in two subject areas that included a period of internship in schools. B TTC operated on a 5-acre campus off Princess Margaret Drive in Belize City that today is home to the Belize City campus of UB's FEA. The B TTC campus officially opened May 7, 1976, costing one million dollars, funded by the UK government. It also housed offices of the Curriculum Development Unit of MOE. One of UB's former presidents, herself a former BTC teacher and curriculum consultant with MOE, Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis, recalls working along with persons like Oscar Requena in curriculum matters back in the days; now in 2025, he is the Honorable Oscar Requena, Belize's Minister of Education, himself a veteran not only of curriculum development but also a primary school teacher for over 19 years.

Percentage of trained teachers in the system 1963-1992

Year	1963	1968	1971	1975	1987	1990	1992
%	13	20	27	31	44	44	47

Source: Figure 11 from
<https://www.thecommonwealth-library.org/index.php/comsec/catalog/download/892/892/7536?inline=1>



(L) Dr. Cynthia Thompson, Ph.D. in Policy Planning and Analysis, Florida State University; M.Sc. Curriculum and Instruction, State University of New York, Albany; BTTC Vice Principal 1986-1989; BTTC Principal (1989-2000); UB Dean of Education during the transition from BTTC (2000 -2003). She led the BTTC through the sweeping worldwide 1990s curriculum reform movement that saw major changes in teacher training. This also meant exploring the introduction, for example, of TESOL training and materials to keep up with emerging English-as-a-Second-Language pedagogy and other dimensions of learning, such as learning styles, etc. This meant working closely with the Ministry's relatively embryonic Curriculum Development Unit. Dr. Thompson also was UB's Assistant Provost (2009-2017) supervising the Department of Student Affairs and Academic Support (SAAS). Dr. Thompson and students created the "We Care" logo that enhanced several years of UB student events.



In the early 1990's two significant changes occurred in teacher education. First, high school graduates (pre-service teachers) began enrolling in teacher education programs. Over time, as in-service teachers became professionally certified, the proportion of in-service to pre-service teachers gradually changed. The second change was initiated by the Primary Education Project, which replaced the Two Plus One Certificate program with the Three-Year Certificate with School Experience program. This new program had two phases: Level 1, a two-year Trained Teacher Certificate for untrained primary school teachers, and Level 2, a one-year intramural program with a semester of practice teaching. The new program aimed to address the criticism that the former program was too theoretical and to meet the need for trained primary school teachers in Belize. The project also funded a training program for primary school principals. The certificate and diploma programs were offered in accordance with the UWI School of Education regulations, supervised by UWI's Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE). Those programs upgraded in-service teachers through both intramural courses and through distance education practices.

Enabling the Reflecting of Belizean Demographics Before Internet: The Correspondence Program: Dr. Santos Mahung recalls the challenges faced at the Teachers College, where teachers had to leave their homes and families to come to Belize City for two years of training under difficult conditions. This often resulted in teachers leaving the profession for opportunities in especially the social and health sectors. To address this, Dr. Mahung, along with Cynthia Thompson and Ella Jean Gillett, developed a correspondence program. In summers, they sent instructors countrywide and occasionally brought teachers in for a course. The program had two levels: one purely by correspondence and one with a mixed modality.



(L) FEA Dean Dr. Priscilla Brown-Lopez with former Chief Education Officer and veteran in Belize's educational development, Mr. Inez Sanchez+. UB honored him in 2012 at FEA's Patriotic Day; he passed away July 24, 2025. May his soul rest in peace. **(R)** UB honors veteran educator Beatrice Kingston Smith, 2012.





Belize School of Nursing

HONORING THE LEGACY OF BELIZE SCHOOL OF NURSING

(formely, Bliss School of Nursing)
Established 1963

From its inception, “the philosophy and objectives of the School of Nursing have been to develop a person with feelings for the sick and dying, and with standards and fundamental principles of nursing as visualized by Miss Nightingale, and to create a desire for continual knowledge.” Peggy Wright's (2000) documentation highlights the caring philosophy central to nursing education in Belize. Nursing education in Belize is over 100 years old, but the physical structure that came to represent nursing education traces back to Baron Henry Edward Bliss, who left a significant portion of his fortune to then British Honduras through the Baron Bliss Trust. The Trust's stipulation allowed funds to be used for vocational school buildings, enabling the construction of the nursing school. “That was the fortuitous loophole which permitted the construction of the School of Nursing.”



(Above) Mrs. Shirley Johnson as Principal Nursing Tutor (circa 1980s); (Below) Ms. Delysia Goff, PNO up to 1988

In October of 1963, costing \$250, 000, the School of Nursing, located on Princess Margaret Drive, Belize City, came into being. The three-story hurricane-resistant building housed classrooms, a library, two laboratories, a faculty room and a principal's office. It also contained a 60-bed hostel, a cafeteria and an industrial kitchen, managed by a “Home Mother.” It continued to provide teaching space during the BELCAST and UCB phases of UB's evolution. Today the compound is still used by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Due respect is given to Belizean historical icons like Nurse Cleopatra White, Nurse Vivian Seay, Ms. Hazel Wright, the first Belizean Principal Nursing Officer (PNO), Inspector of Midwives Ms. Joyce Findley, PNO Ms. Delysia Goff and so many others who shaped nursing and provided care in Belize's urban and rural areas. Today, nurses trained by the University of Belize, the successor institution, care for and serve all Belizeans through public and private hospitals, health centers and clinics.



(L-R) Patricia Beet, nursing graduate, receives certificate from Mrs. Joan Musa, Clinical Instructor 1980-1985

From its inception, The Ministry of Health oversaw practice and training programs. The Principal Nursing Officers, the Principal Tutors, Nursing Tutors and Hospital Matrons were in charge of the educational programs and the country's nursing services. Students entered at the post-secondary level. One of the clinical instructors, Mrs. Joan Musa, a registered nurse from England, shared in a recent phone interview herein that, in fact, she is an alum of BELCAST. “I quickly realized that I was doing a lot more administration than clinical work,” said Mrs. Musa. “I was a clinical instructor from 1980 – 1985 at the Belize School of Nursing; when BELCAST was created, I enrolled in 1984 to improve my classroom teaching skills and graduated from that BELCAST program.” Mrs. Musa, who went on to pioneer the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired (BCVI), recalls the collegial relationship shared with then Principal Tutor and subsequent PNO, Mrs. Shirley Johnson (the late mother of today's Dean of UB's School of Medicine, Dr. Lisa Johnson). The School's faculty and leadership ensured that the curriculum produced nurses who were capable of functioning in any environment.

The 2000 Wright report notes that the government provided all health services in Belize, which included eight public and two private hospitals with a total bed capacity of approximately 600 beds. Additionally, there were facilities for the physically and mentally impaired, as well as for the elderly. Mobile health clinics and outpatient centers offered additional healthcare services throughout the country. The School of Nursing offered a three-year Advanced Diploma in Professional Nursing, producing candidates for Registered Nurse (RN) licensing, and a one-year program in Practical Nursing, training students to provide healthcare under the direction of a registered nurse. By the 1970s, the School also provided training in Midwifery and Rural Health Nursing. Over the decades, it expanded its training to other advanced practice areas, focusing on empathetic clinical excellence and adaptability. Initially, graduations were held at the Nursing School but moved to the Bliss Institute when class sizes increased.



(L-R) Principal Tutor, Ms. Katherine Price; Nursing Student; Nursing Tutor Mrs. Shirley Johnson (circa late 1970s or early 1980s)



The curriculum was British based, and in the 1950s and 1960s, RNs trained in Belize would receive further training in Jamaica or the United Kingdom to advance to the “Sister” level, now called the Nurse Manager. Nursing education continues to evolve, from the entry requirements to the educational tools used, to the clinical environment in which nurses must function. Nursing is now a department under the University of Belize’s Faculty of Health Sciences. At its graduation ceremonies in 2023, UB honored Mrs. Cynthia Guild, a nurse educator, who has devoted over forty-four years of service to Belize as a nurse, over thirty-seven years which were devoted to nursing education. This is perhaps one of the longest, if not the longest, documented tenures in Belize’s formal nursing education system. She went from Clinical Instructor to Nurse Tutor at BNS, to associate lecturer and Chair of UB’s Nursing Department. She bore witness to, participated in, and led the evolution of nursing education in Belize, carrying the torch of all the great nurses of yesteryear, mentioned and unmentioned, in every fibre of her being, in every word spoken to a nursing student, in every encounter with a patient in need. The Belize School of Nursing will forever stand as the proud prologue to nursing education in Belize.



Mrs. Cynthia Guild,
Lifelong Nursing Educator

Note: Much of the above information came from “Belize School of Nursing” (2000) by Peggy Wright, Western Kentucky University Bowling Green, Kentucky. Its references included Professional Nursing Programme. Belize School of Nursing, 1987. 5. Hermann, op.cit., pp 121-125. 6. Mrs. Joan Musa also provided input and Dr. Lisa Johnson provided much background and all the pictures. Additional source used: “Baron Bliss and his Bounty to Belize” 1986, GOB document.



HONORING THE LEGACY OF THE BELIZE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Established 1986

The Belize College of Agriculture (BCA), was originally the Belize School of Agriculture that was founded on July 4, 1977, under the pivotal role of Peace Corps Volunteer George LeBard, the Rotary Club, the Roman Catholic Mission, USAID, Peace Corps and Belize's Ministry of Education. Its purpose was focused on one main goal: To provide agricultural education to willing students upon their completion of an agriculture production program in primary schools at the time. The School of Agriculture offered 1-2 year certificate and diploma programs in General Agriculture. Prior to that there was a Training School (1953 - 1977) offering short courses for field staff and farmers. An Ex-Servicemen and Experimental Station (1948 - 1953) did research on crops and livestock and offered rehabilitation training.

The Belize School of Agriculture merger to the Belize College of Agriculture (BCA) in 1986 saw its diploma program evolve to two-year programs offered in Applied Agriculture Science in 1989. It was under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. BCA was born from the success of outputs like the Relevant Education of Agriculture Production Program (REAP), begun under BCA's predecessor. This success, coupled with the need for providing motivated students with agricultural educational opportunities, led to BCA. One early criticism of the balancing of academic and practical curricula was "the tendency to prioritize academic subjects over practical agricultural training." However, by all accounts, by 1998, BCA was already coming into its own as a main player in Belize's agricultural economic peg, as may be indicated in this excerpt from a News 5 story of February 24, 1998, "Belize College of Agriculture Holds Open Day":

"Last Friday I ventured to Central Farm to discover that the future of the nation's agricultural sector is in pretty good hands: Over two thousand high school and primary school students from across the country converged Friday on the grounds of the Belize College of Agriculture. The students toured, took notes and sampled the variety of foods that were on display. The occasion was B.C.A's open day. The event, which is held annually, is primarily used as a marketing tool to encourage students to consider a career in the field of farming. Hugh O'Brien, Principal, B.C.A: 'The main purpose of the annual open day is for the college to showcase its programs, its activities and the various fields displays that they have out there, live stock, crops Mostly to the high school students who are really potential applicants to the college. That is the primary focus of the open day.' Whether the students were interested in animal husbandry, cash crops or starting up their own production line, there was no shortage of career choices."

Source:<https://archive.channel5belize.com/archives/25281>

Over 2,000 primary and secondary students attended that 1998 Open Day and, for the first time in BCA's annual Open Days, there was private sector representation (Marie Sharpe Fine Foods) and Belize Marketing Board showcasing different ways rice could be used, such as for rice tamales, horchata, pudding, etc. In 1998, 18 different products and 9 jams-jellies were displayed. In that same news report, one 1998 student named Abby Lisbey described her experience: "Well we have food processing and food processing is very important here at BCA ... we have different fruits here ... left over fruits. So we would use them like especially when it is not in the season, we would preserve them so it is very important for preservation ..."

Location and Amalgamation: With the merger in 2000 into the Agriculture Department under UB's Faculty of Science and Technology, the site of the former Belize College of Agriculture is now the Central Farm campus of the University of Belize. Located on the George Price Highway in the Cayo District, it is about a 30-minute drive west from UB's Central Campus in Belmopan.



Period		
1948-1953	Ex-Servicemen & Experimental Station	Rehabilitation training, crop & livestock research
1953-1977	Training School	Short courses for field staff & farmers
1977-1986	Belize School of Agriculture (BSA)	1-2 year certificate & diploma in General Agriculture
1986-2000	Belize College of Agriculture (BCA) (Under UCB)	Diplomas & Associate degrees in Applied Agricultural Science
2000-2006	University of Belize-FANR Dept.	Higher education; later declined due to administrative challenges
2008-Present	University of Belize - CF (Sustainable Agriculture)	Associate degree, research, extension, agro-processing, outreach

CENTRAL FARM DIRECTORS SINCE YEAR 1966

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Godsman Ellis 2. Mr. Reginald Pitts 3. Dr. Geronimo Cal 4. Mr. Moises Cal 5. Mr. Armando Cowo 6. Mr. Hugh O'Brien 7. Mr. Romaldo Lewis 8. Mr. Jorge Cawich 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Mr. Gabino Canto 10. Mr. David Jones: 2008 11. Dr. Gordon Holder: 2008 - 2018 12. Dr. Omiara Alvarez: 2018-2019 13. Ms. Zoe Frazo: 2019-2021 14. Mr. Fransico Tzul: Interim from 2021-2022 15. Mr. Maxmiliano Ortega: 2022 - Present
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The following link provides more information about the background of the UB Central Farm campus:

https://docslib.org/doc/529392/university-of-belize-central-farm-campus-ubcf-belize%20%22%22?utm_source=chatgpt.com



HONORING THE LEGACY OF THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF BELIZE

Established 1986

And what UCB catapulted from: The Belize College of Arts, Science and Technology (BELCAST 1979 - 1986)

UCB's first president was Dr. Colville Young, Belize's premier linguist and himself a former lecturer at two of the legacy institutions. When he left to take up appointment as Governor General, Dr. Angel Cal took over from Sir Colville Young and for the next 10 years of its existence, was UCB's president. Said Dr. Cal as he reflected on this 25 years later: "We were getting into a phase of education with UCB that that we had no track record with. There was no institutional culture for having a university in Belize. Really, it began with the Belize College of Arts, Science and Technology (BELCAST), that the government established."

"It was at BELCAST where this entire story began to take higher education not just into post-secondary education, sixth form, but rather to tertiary education. The basis of determining what the national needs' priorities would be came from our doing the first national labor demand survey; it was in response to trying to define the national needs that we did that."

– Dr. Santos Mahung, BELCAST President (1980 - 1986; UB President 2008 - 2010)

Dr. Eve Aird, in her study "The Evolution of the Belizean University," brackets the start of university in Belize as 1977 – 2000, when the Committee for Sixth Form Studies was established in 1977. Recall that this was at the same time the Caribbean CXC examinations began replacing the British GCE and A level examinations—when the region's identity was beginning to merge as distinctly Caribbean. During this 23-year period, Dr. Aird noted that three distinct institutions resulted that clearly pointed to an embryonic university structure: BELCAST, UCB, and UB. Aird notes "the general concern was that tertiary programs were not directly responsive to Belize's human resource developmental needs." None of the then existing five institutions was able to provide training in what were critically identified development needs—in applied science, including health care, with technology in fields like agriculture, fisheries, telecom, teacher training and management. BELCAST was the beginning of the defining of a Belizean consciousness. However, the history of BELCAST as a consortium of collaborating colleges actually represented a fragmentation of tertiary education with inefficient use of limited resources. It was, as Aird noted, "unwieldy" (p. 111). Even with the evolution to UCB, Dr. Aird noted that limited resources continued to be fragmented among five existing tertiary institutions."

UCB was intended to be its own independent, autonomous higher educational institution, and its ACT made it a statutory body. Most UCB students were in a handful of programs, with Business being the largest. Dr. Cal noted that UCB allowed Belize to begin wetting its feet. "To put it succinctly, what I faced, as president for 10 years at UCB was a policy that, for want of a better term, I will call 'benign neglect,' meaning that government funded up to one million dollars annually. It became at par or similar to the funding allotted to the Belize Technical College and the Belize Teachers College. No matter what budget we sent up each year, UCB received one million—despite the pressing amalgamation needs. President Cal and his team sought other funding and raised three million in later years to assist the university college's immediate needs.

UCB's idea was similar to that of the University of the West Indies, initially established as the University College of the West Indies. "Several former British colonies in Africa also used the same model, apprenticing with a mature, well-established university of strong traditions and good standards, and, after a certain period of 'apprenticeship' so to speak, it then becomes a full-fledged university. Dr. Cal noted: "That was the idea of the University College of Belize." In 1986, the government of Belize selected Ferris State College, itself on its own path to becoming Ferris State University, for UCB to apprentice under. By the end of the old millennium, it was determined that the Ferris experiment was not working, with the UCB teaching faculty being very clear that the apprenticeship was not happening and with frustration from a lack of clearly defined focus and structures—no research office, no QA office—and lack of necessary university mechanisms. In a sense, BELCAST was then resurrected in a different manner, through University College of Belize. Ferris State University phased out and Belizeans took it over in full.

A national university demanded Belizean approaches and content—and application of regional and global content to meet what Belize defined as its needs and priorities.

"Actually, the hardest part of that resistance when we first started BELCAST, then UCB, was incorporating the Belize Technical College. The Teachers College wasn't much of a problem. There were some individuals married to the past. But by the time it became UB and I came to UB, we did not have that problem. The other thing is there was a degree of association I had with Belize Technical College because I taught at Technical from 1976-77, so with Morrison and all the other members of faculty."

- Dr. Santos Mahung, BELCAST President (1980-86); UB President (2008-2010).



(L-R) Selwyn King, then UB's Public Relations Officer; Sir Colville Young **(Back)** President Dr. Cary Fraser: 2012 at UB Patriotic Day. In the late 1980s, Dr. Colville Young served as President of University College of Belize. He took up appointment as Belize's Governor-General in 1993 through 2021. He was knighted in 1994. Sir Colville Young is Belize's pre-eminent linguist and veteran source for many of the entries in the 2007 and 2024 editions of the Belize Kriol dictionary; he is also a pre-eminent musician and composer, and at heart, a stalwart teacher, having taught at the Belize Technical College and elsewhere. He wrote the lyrics and composed the music for the UB Song that the UB Choir sings annually at graduation. UB's FST assistant professor, Dr. Leopold Perriort was the UB Choir's director for many years. At its 2019 graduation ceremony, UB conferred its first Honorary Doctoral Degree to Sir. Colville Young.

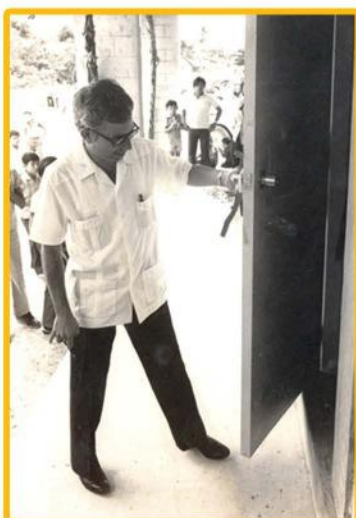
(R) circa 1980s: Then Dr. Colville Young, Mr. Roy Cayetano, the late Mr. Rudy Arana, Education Officer, Mr. Joey Belisle, veteran educator, and Mr. Marcelo Coyi at Central Farm for a workshop on the then emerging ESL approaches in teaching.



Under Dr. Angel Cal's 10 years of institutional pioneering work as UCB's president, the "universe" in the word "university" began to take shape in earnest: mission, vision, strategic planning, a QA unit, a research office, robust faculty upgrading (from bachelor's to doctorates), regional and international networking, the establishment of ATLIB, the Calabash Caye and the marine research program, consultancy unit, the initial work towards accreditation, the successful fiscal story at UCB, securing for UB a square mile plus of titled land in Belmopan, the academic infrastructure—most of these were brought over and can still be found at UB today. Indeed, the continuation of the UCB work formed the substance of Dr. Cal's work at the UB presidency.

MESSAGE FROM RT. HONORABLE SAID MUSA: THE ARCHITECT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN BELIZE

Primer Minister of Belize (Aug. 28, 1998 – Feb. 8, 2008);
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Education (1989-1993)



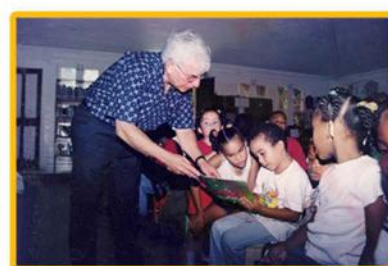
“It was during a PUP government that we established the first tertiary education—institute—BELCAST, the Belize College of Arts, Science and Technology. It was BELCAST that was later transformed into UB, the University of Belize.

BELCAST was the genesis with the assistance of the European Union. And with that Vision of being a comprehensive cultural regional Institution, we also established the Regional Language Center in Belmopan at UB for English and Spanish students—thus promoting Belize as a bridge between the Caribbean and Central America. Congratulations to our national university on its twenty-fifth anniversary.”

(Above) Hon. Said Musa opens a school building as Minister of Education (circa 1980s, photo credit: yasser)



(L) October 15, 2022, UB Graduation: Hon. Kareem Musa, Rt. Honorable Said Musa’s son, receives Honorary Doctoral Degree for his father, the first such conferred by UB, from then UB Board Chair, now Attorney General, Anthony Sylvester—himself a UCB alum.



UB also honored Belizean musical legend, Gerald “Lord” Rhaburn with an Honorary Doctoral Degree at this 2022 graduation.

Even as Prime Minister, Hon. Said Musa was still very invested in doing the work of education. **(Above)** Hon. Musa interacting with school children engaged in a reading program.

Said Musa, then as Attorney General and Minister of Education and Sports in 1979 and the birth of BELCAST, noted that “An important pre-requisite for an independent Belize was its ability to produce its own professionals and paraprofessionals at a high level of training” (in Aird, 2001, p. 101).

14 MESSAGE FROM DR. CYNTHIA EVE AIRD Provost, Galen University



"I am pleased to extend my warmest congratulations to the Board of Trustees, President, Faculty and Staff of the University of Belize, our national university, on the momentous occasion of its Silver Jubilee! This significant milestone marks a quarter-century of UB's existence, formed from the merger of its five legacy institutions and its achievements, of which there are many. These first 25 years have not come without challenges, but the University, like its mascot, the Black Jaguar, has used its strength and valour to rise above these and transform itself and the nation through its various institutes (such as ERI and BELPRI) and its academic programs and services. This Silver Jubilee is an opportunity to celebrate the University's history, growth and its many contributions to Belize's development, such as its research institutes, its teacher education programs and the new medical school.

It is an opportunity to celebrate its past, honor its present and envision its future. I thank the UB Community for its service to Belize's development and I wish the University well for its future.

- *Dr. Cynthia Eve Aird: Provost, Galen University since 2014; former Senior Lecturer, UCB and UB (1990-2003). Galen University and UB have partnered on several occasions in higher education endeavours, not only via ATLIB, but also in hosting research symposiums. Dr. Aird's Ph.D. dissertation was in Curriculum, Instruction and Administration. Her career in higher education in Belize spans 35 years.*

MESSAGE FROM DR. SHARMAYNE SAUNDERS Head of UWI Global Campus, Belize and Chair of ATLIB

"It is with great pride and heartfelt admiration that I extend my warmest congratulations to the University of Belize on the momentous occasion of its 25th Anniversary – its Silver Jubilee. This milestone marks not only the passage of time but also the resilience, impact and evolution of Belize's national university in service to our people and country. As one who has had the privilege of walking alongside the University through various phases of its growth, I have seen first-hand the depth of commitment, intellectual vigour and visionary leadership that have shaped UB's path. In my capacity as Chair of ATLIB, I have had the unique vantage point to witness the University of Belize's continued contributions to the broader tertiary education sector, inspiring excellence and fostering national development. UB's journey has not been without its challenges, but its achievements are undeniable. From expanding academic offerings to advancing research and innovation, the



University has remained steadfast in its mission to "Educate to Transform." It has shaped countless lives and strengthened the intellectual and social fabric of Belize. As you commemorate this Silver Jubilee, may you reflect with pride on all you have accomplished and look ahead with boldness and clarity toward even greater achievements. Congratulations to the entire UB community—past and present—for 25 years of transformative impact. Here's to your continued success in the next 25 years and beyond."

Dr. Sharmayne Saunders: Head, The University of the West Indies (UWI), Global Campus, Belize: Ph.D. 2006 In Organization & Management, Capella University (Minnesota USA). UB Adjunct Lecturer (2000 to 2004); member of UB Board of Trustees (2010–2019), its Vice Chair (2015 to 2019), Chair of its Audit Committee (2013 to 2019); Chair of the Association of Tertiary Level Institutions of Belize (ATLIB: 2013 to 2020), now ATLIB Chair as of July 2025



CELEBRATING THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE

Established 2000



BELIZE

**UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE ACT
CHAPTER 37**

**REVISED EDITION 2000
SHOWING THE LAW AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 2000**

This is a revised edition of the law, prepared by the Law Revision Commissioner under the Law Revision Act, Chapter 3 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 1980 - 1990.



Belmopan



Central Farm



Toledo



Belize City



Calabash Caye

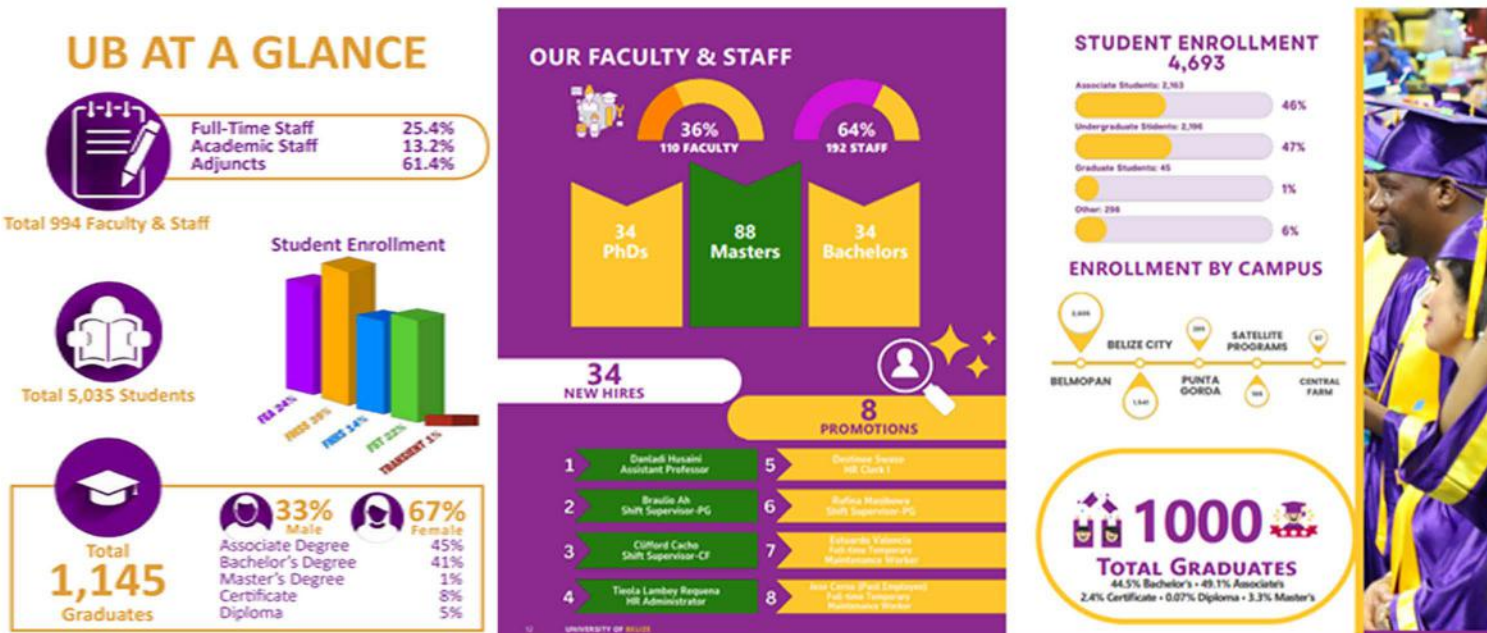


Hunting Caye

STUDENT ENROLMENT AND GRADUATION STATISTICS 2000 - 2025

	Total students	Female	Male	Graduates
2000	2,544	1,601	943	184
2001	2,894	1,836	1,058	288
2002	2,796	1,779	1,017	395
2003	2,585	1,664	921	582
2004	2,684	1,704	980	594
2005	2,847	1,789	1,058	514
2006	3,016	1,910	1,106	426
2007	3,411	2,172	1,239	500
2008	3,909	2,522	1,387	509
2009	4,394	2,865	1,529	505
2010	4,851	3,157	1,694	704
2011	4,917	3,166	1,751	882
2012	5,149	3,311	1,838	918
2013	4,890	3,125	1,765	905
2014	4,842	3,103	1,739	920
2015	5,211	3,376	1,835	904
2016	5,379	3,518	1,861	1,005
2017	5,458	3,587	1,871	1,023
2018	5,767	3,784	1,983	1,140
2019	5,907	3,906	2,001	1,133
2020	5,248	3,456	1,792	1,185
2021	5,261	3,519	1,742	989
2022	4,865	3,278	1,587	1,134
2023	5,210	3,488	1,722	922
2024	5,425	3,695	1,730	881

Note: Any discrepancies in the numbers in the above chart with the information reflected in the annual reports below would be due to financial outstanding balances.



Source (L) UB Annual Report 2018-2019 Academic Year (R) UB Annual Report, 2021-22 Academic Year - COVID

THE TRANSITIONAL YEARS



Dr. Angel Cal

UB President: August 2000 - December 2002

“To transform Belize into the country we want it to be, our best allies in this national undertaking are the wise use of technology, the transparent and efficient use of our fiscal and other material resources, the support of our partners, including the government of Belize, good planning, and above all, the expertise, the wisdom and the commitment of our professionals—the architects and engineers of our highest house of learning at the service of our Belizeans. Congratulations, UB!”

Dr. Angel Cal: Ph.D. in Latin American History from the University of Arizona, USA (1991); President UCB (1990-2000); Founding Chairman of ATLIB; UB Quality Assurance Officer (2005 – 2012); UB’s Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost) 2008-2010; UB’s History Department pioneer (2008; 2016-2018; 2024 – Present)

“While the idea of a higher educational institute—the University of Belize—had been on the table for a while, we had not really tested the waters,” Dr. Angel Cal noted in an interview for this magazine. In fact, Dr. Cal, as the first president of UB, brought 10 years of experience as the President of one of the amalgamated institutions—the University College of Belize. “There was no institutional culture for having a university in Belize; in retrospect, we were weak in pre-planning.” Dr. Cal pointed to an example where he was the equivalent of a Dean for three years (2013 – 2016), at the Universidad Intercultural Maya de Quintana Roo (UIMQROO) in Mexico. With federal, state and local funding, UIMQROO took about three years pre-planning before they opened their doors, having first clearly defined systems and structures, matriculation and other policies. With UB, it was in January of 2000 that Dr. Cal was asked to take on the gargantuan task of amalgamating five institutions, with roughly eight months “to get the ship ready to sail.”

The Immediate Challenges in Amalgamating the Legacy Institutions

In setting sail, Dr. Cal first brought the heads of the legacy institutions together in order “to plan because this was not just any one of the five doing the planning. It had to be all of us together.” Two of the most pressing challenges were:

The Budget

One very real example of this challenge is that UCB had long before restructured its salary scales whereby the equivalent of the CEO or the Chief Education Officer’s pay scale was what UCB was paying its VPs (2 initially and then 3), and people with master’s degrees who were senior lecturers were being paid a very attractive salary. But, as President Cal noted, “When you triplicate the number of teaching faculty—you can’t bring down the UCB peoples’ salary, but neither then can you pay the other transferred people a lower salary than those at UCB [which were people coming in from Technical and elsewhere].” That took almost 60% of the government’s grant, and it was a crucial time; there was so much to buy, so many, many, many things to be done.”





MATRICULATION AND CURRICULA

In 2000, what UB was doing, in less than 2 or 3 months, was “to admit students—trying to cater for existing students from five different institutions who were admitted under different program definitions—and having the right to say they were admitted under one set of requirements so they should graduate with those.” However, the new students had to follow the more standardized emerging credit system. “So, running simultaneously for one program—this was a challenge,” said President Cal. (Above) Dr. Cal as Provost and Head of Quality Assurance, leads an Academic Council Meeting in 2007-2008 Academic Year at UB.

FLEXIBILITY IN DEALING WITH MATRICULATION AND CURRICULA ARTICULATION CHALLENGES

“It did cause some agony! We were saying, well the existing students can’t be penalized, so we are gonna have to be flexible with existing students until they phase out—but we are going to go for the new curriculum. But what is the new curriculum? You see, this is where there was a bit of friction here and there because the new curriculum was essentially the UCB curriculum [the closest in credit structure too]. We were under the credit system, ala Ferris State University [and still are-credit system]...and so for the people who were not under the credit system, to transition into what was before a one-year course, or so, that was very, very, very difficult.”

Yet it happened. However, the pre-amalgamated UCB had spent 10 plus years building upon the embryonic system of its forerunner BELCAST. Therefore, UCB had many university-level systems such as course outlines readily available for sharing with sixth forms and other transfer institutions’ paperwork needs. On the other hand, virtually none existed in the university format for the other amalgamated institutions .



(L-R) Veteran educator Mr. Israel Cano; he was Dean at the Belmopan Junior College, developed as a unit of UCB; Dr. Angel Cal, former UCB president and UB’s first president; Mrs. Elma Arzu, veteran educator and UB Faculty of Education and Arts member until her retirement.

ALWAYS TOWARDS A STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH TO ACADEMICS

While his hands were full in dealing with immediate amalgamation logistics as president, Dr. Cal also served as its Quality Assurance Officer from 2005 to 2008, with a primary focus dedicated to developing a quality assurance system with program specifications, syllabi, course outline, etc., to be all ready BEFORE the student applies, a true beginning into being student-centered in academics. These are not just the course outlines students are familiar with—they are critical documents towards quality standards—and towards the road to accreditation. And at its heart, it places students first: “With a Program Specs document, a student can look at it and decide based on pre-defined specs whether they want to come to university or not.” And QA was saying to UB at that time that although it was “agony; it takes a while; it takes a high degree of discipline, institutional discipline” it was necessary. By the time he exited UB-Quality Assurance in 2008, 19 of the then 53 UB programs had gone through a formal program review process.

CONTINUING THE NETWORKING AND INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY BEGUN UNDER UCB

In December 1995, UCB became a formal member of the Consejo Superior Universitario Centro America (CSUCA), the Central American University Council of Higher Education. Dr. Cal negotiated fees of 50%, arguing that the fledgling UCB had at the time less than 200 students, unable to pay what a member like San Carlos University with over 75,000 students paid. Through CSUCA, Dr. Cal was able to lead UCB's first institutional self-study (when he moved on to be UB's Quality Assurance Officer) with the support of CSUCA, and with European Union funding other projects included library networking, research networking, the development of new programs networking and tracking of graduates networking, in which UB participated.” Dr. Cal noted that ACTI, the Caribbean version so to speak, is slightly different, maybe not as successful in getting external funding as CSUCA.



As Dr. Cal put it: “When we opened the doors of UCB, we were getting into a phase of education that was empty, so to speak, that we had no track record with; in many ways UB most closely patterned the format of UCB.” [Right: Dr. Cal and Dr. Wilma Wright, then Dean of FEA (2008-2012), Acting Provost (2012-2016) of UB at a 2012 event for Dr. Cal.]

With his vast institutional knowledge, with his own penchant for also viewing the impact of decisions through a historical lens and with his vast range of teaching, administrative, research and experience, Dr. Angel Cal will forever be cemented as a part of the UB family. In addition to his flexibility in dealing with amalgamating diverse institutional cultures, his sober and cautiously optimistic approach to those early challenges is perhaps what most steered UB successfully through its transitional years and beyond. Moreover Dr. Angel Cal's national, regional and international university networking experience makes him an invaluable part of UB's history—even more so now that in 2025 he is back at UB as an Associate Professor in History.

THE TUMULTUOUS YEARS



Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis, UB President Emeritus
January 2003 – 2004 (Interim President); 2004 - 2007 (President);
July 2010 - July 2011 (Acting President)

“UB will always hold a special place in my heart. This 25th anniversary is a time for reflection, but also it’s a time for looking forward. I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to have served this institution through its early period of humble beginnings and I am filled with optimism for its future. Congratulations, UB!”

Ph.D. Counseling Psychology (Clinical Internship) 1989, University of Alberta. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; R.Psyc. Chartered Psychologist. 1988. Retired. Psychological Association of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; M.A.E. Masters in Education (Double Major: Educational Administration & Supervision; Guidance and Counseling) 1980, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, USA; B.A. English & Biology (Double Major) 1971, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada; B.Ed. Secondary Education, 1972, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

HEALING FRACTURED FACULTY AND STAFF RELATIONS DURING SEPARATE PRESIDENCY TENURES

“In terms of healing the fractures that we were having at UB, communication from Day 1 was very important [Dr. Lewis is a trained counsellor and a national literary icon] So, I spent a lot of my first year just engaging with faculty, engaging with staff, and making sure that they knew that my commitment was 101 percent and that I would do everything possible to make things work. I was at Belize Technical College and it was one of the founding institutions. And I think it was the institution that had the greatest difficulty with amalgamation. It was really a difficult balancing act—trying to be a president and encourage those who were my colleagues to join what I felt was really a good thing. I know many people, even now, still have difficulty with that amalgamation, but, I felt that eventually what was intended when UB was formed would have lasting and important relevance for our little country of Belize.”

APPROACH: No long List of Goals - Most important was survival and helping a "fractured constellation of individuals operating in silos survive." UB was taking shape, but there were many fledgling fires to put out. UB was still in the metamorphosing phase." Additionally, the newly emerged Faculty and Staff Association "was a force to be reckoned with," a dynamic entity impacting on the Administration of UB, with political upheaval on the main campus a part of the history.

TRANSITIONAL CHALLENGES THAT CONTINUED THROUGH UB’S FIRST FIVE+ YEARS

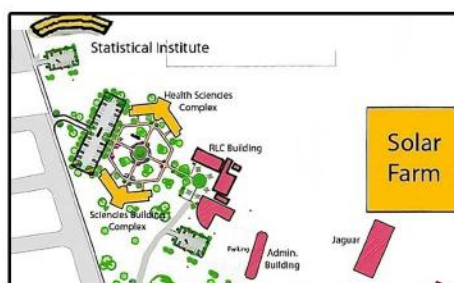
- **Unhappy Faculty, Staff and Students:** The dynamics and negotiating with same
- **Financial Challenges:** A sprawling system poorly resourced, low fees and challenges with collecting these; scholarship availabilities for student needs
- **Capacity to Deliver Programs:** Competition with the secondary institutions (associate’s)
- **Challenges with Lack of Accreditation:** Institution and the programs, public perceptions.
- **Intense Activity with Regional and Foreign Universities:** Collaboration to offer programs, joint research and student exchanges; built necessary networking but took time.

Dr. Lewis was then offered tenure as substantive president and concludes that the description of these being tough years is definitely warranted. The challenges intensified:

- **Belmopan: Significant Resistance to the Move** – yet watershed for growth and expansion. Challenges with infrastructure to accommodate faculty, staff, students, but created space needed for institutional growth
- **Continued Challenges with Financial Support from GOB:** Inadequate subvention; challenges collecting tuition and other fees
- **High Demand for Signing of MOUs:** Generated by universities in the region with North Florida, already established through UCB via COBEC, and UWI leading the Way (Visits from 2 UWI Chancellors ++)

Perseverance Pays Off: Upgrading Faculty, Accreditation Push Challenges, New Labs and institutes

- **Initial Offers-Student Support:** Institutions in England, [online], and Canada, [Exchange Students]
- **Push for Accreditation:** Its challenges
- **Access to various Master's Programs for Faculty.** Push for faculty to study abroad; resulting stresses from lack of replacement lecturers in their absence
- **Doctoral Degrees:** Accessible [for faculty via UB-Nova Southeastern University agreement].
- **Propagation Lab established at Faculty of Agriculture in Central Farm**
- **Environmental Research Institute Established**
- **On Campus Solar System Installed:** via JICA in collaboration with Belize Electricity Ltd.
- **Change of Administrative Systems:** the establishment of Deans
- **Research Engagements and Exchanges in Science with a Refurbished Calabash Caye** overseen by UB's ERI
- **Introduction of UB's First Independent FEA Master's Program**
- **Establishment of the Propagation Lab at FST Central Farm Agriculture Campus**
- **5th Anniversary Celebrations:** All out grand successful events over three days; successfully settled on new Belmopan main campus. [Note: Dr. Lewis's famous Belizean poem "**Tribute to Our Pioneers**" was featured at the ceremony to launch the completion of this move.] All faculty and staff from all five institutions with five years of UB Service honoured with commemorative 5-yr. UB pins. This tradition has continued, also awarded at 10 years.





NETWORKING AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

Indeed, Dr. Lewis entitled her 2010-2011 Annual Report remarks as “A Year for Partnerships.” One of the most noteworthy was with the Ministry of Finance and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for a system of photovoltaic panels on 2.04 acres on the central campus in Belmopan, completed as scheduled in August of 2012. Another was the European Union-funded Biopropagation Lab at UB’s Department of Agriculture in Central Farm, allowing UB to produce large volumes of disease free in-vitro plants, benefitting Belize’s agricultural sector, thus assisting in national food security efforts.

Moreover, amalgamating as one university meant UB had to get faculty trained, upgrading those in some programs who did not have bachelor’s degrees, upgrading bachelor’s to master’s and getting some Ph.Ds or Ed.Ds, to get towards the kind of accreditation that UB would be able to seek. Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis, herself torn between her roots loyalty to Belize Technical College and its history and the vision of UB she knew viscerally and scientifically was a step in progressing, recalls:

“I remember sitting at the Belize Technical College compound before the big move to Belmopan ... I remember sitting late nights with faculty who needed to go abroad to study, and I had to literally sit with them to complete applications—they ended up going to Taiwan, to elsewhere. I tried to maximise the time I had with faculty as I was between all the campuses at that time, working from all the sites, working with faculty especially at Belize Technical College to make sure they were able to get the kind of support they needed to go abroad to study; many will tell you that they were able to advance their academic qualifications because of this critical step.”



Indeed, Dr. Sylvia Cattouse also played a crucial role in encouraging faculty to commit to doctoral programs, similar to the efforts of Dr. Morter-Lewis. Faculty had to pay about one-third of the doctoral degree cost, indicating the university culture had become embedded. Seven full-time and several adjunct faculty earned doctoral degrees from this partnership with UB and Nova Southeastern University. Dr. Cattouse, who is today a Dean at Galen University which continues to partner with tertiary institutions in Belize, acknowledges the steadfast leadership of President Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis during those Tumultuous Years.

(R Front) Dr. Sylvia Cattouse in the academic procession at a UB Graduation **(Back)** Mr. William Neal, then Dean of Students



NAVIGATING THE POLITICS

"The larger politics had a lot to do with the financing of UB. "Big, big challenge: All these colleges that came together to form UB themselves were not in the best shape, with repairs needed and the subvention we got for the many campuses; it operates very differently from the amalgamated one-system, that is, the separate pieces operating alone compared to one combined." Dr. Morter-Lewis also mentioned that the economies of scale were not yet fully realized, and there were pressing concerns still such as differing salary scales and the adjustment process. Dr. Morter-Lewis described her role at UB during her acting years as being in a "holding pattern" due to the imminent search for a new president and the circumstances of her return to the office.



The Critical Role of Alumni: "I tried to get one established during my time there. It proved difficult because of the controversy regarding the amalgamating institutions, many of whom [lecturers and staff] attended UB to further their education, but felt they had in a sense betrayed their alma maters, whether it was Belize Teachers College, Belize Technical College, etc. The result was that it was a struggling effort by the Development Office [Now the Office of Institutional Advancement]. However, after 25 years, with graduates in the thousands [over 18,000], many of whom are not graduates from any of the five founding institutions, I would hope there is a robust and functioning UB Alumni Association, one that was essentially non-functional at its start, but present at graduations to swear in new graduates."

In her later years, after her UB journey, Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis taught and counselled at Ocean Academy in Caye Caulker, Belize. Said that institution: "Belize's Renaissance Woman ... Ocean Academy is truly blessed to have Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis as a member of the faculty. She is a shining example of how much a woman can achieve" (Source: Ocean Academy Newsletter). It is also noted that Dr. Lewis was the only female Head of General Studies Department at legacy institution Belize Technical College for years—she is also the only woman to have held the post of UB president in its first 25 years. Now in "full retirement," she often contributes to Canadian educational and cultural publications and divides her time between Belize and with her children and grandchildren in the USA and Canada.

San Pedro Sun, Vol. 15, No. 16 (April 21, 2005): The President of the University of Belize (UB), Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis and the Director of Development, Dr. Geraldo Flowers, visited the beautiful island of San Pedro on Thursday, April 14th, and were the guest speakers at the weekly meeting of the Ambergris Caye Chamber of Commerce (ACCC), held at the Blue Water Grill. The purpose of their visit was to inform the directors and members of the ACCC about the drive UB has undertaken in order to raise capital to provide 50 scholarships for those students who have the academic qualifications but may lack the necessary funds to further their education." [Picture Source: 2005, San Pedro Sun]



(L) 2006: UB students in national celebrations parade. **(R)** 2007-2008 UB Library staff orienting students to EbscoHost database for online searches.

THE STRATEGIZING YEARS



Dr. Santos Mahung
President: July 2008 – June 2010

“I really offer heartfelt congratulations to the University. I offer congratulations to the student body, to the staff, to the faculty, to the administration and to President Palacio. I think UB has grown and has established itself as a national university—AND as THE premier institution of higher learning.”

Ph.D. Education (Curriculum Studies), 1982, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

M.Ed. Science Education, 1975, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
 M.S. Chemistry, 1971, Holy Cross College, Worcester, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Exec. Dir. BIM, Director of Training and Scholarships, OAS, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education; President of BELCAST (1980-1986).

A SHIFT OF FOCUS ESSENTIALLY FROM ADMINISTRATION

“In essence, my predecessors spent time solidifying the base. But it was time ... to change the focus from an administration focus—making sure you had professors, making sure you had basic services for students ... to a transformation.” Upon assuming office, President Dr. Mahung led some 350 full-time faculty, staff and administrators, and adjunct faculty whom he urged to join him “in this quest and whose support and commitment to the University of Belize are fundamental to providing an educational product worthy of respect.” (UB Annual Report: Aug. 1, 2007-July 31, 2008).

A SHIFT TO A TRANSFORMATIVE VIEW: RESEARCH MANDATED

Dr. Mahung points to the clear starting focus of UB’s Vision statement in his transformative tenureship: the development of the university as THE national university. “And I think it is now, clearly, but also focused on crossing borders and becoming a known entity in the region—meaning the Central American region that we are a part of and the United States—because a lot of our students were going of the United States. About the mission statement for the university—that the university would be a national multilocation institution committed to excellence in higher education and service—I added something that didn’t exist before in the mission statement—research—because research goes hand in hand with higher education.”



HARNESSING THREE KEY STRENGTHS

- Management Experience
- Understanding the Breadth and Depth of National Needs and Priorities
- Leveraging Linkages with Other Universities: Faculty Development and Exchanges

STRATEGIC PLANNING: CATAPULTING FROM A SOLIDIFIED BASE

Strategic priorities with targeted deliverables identified were the hallmarks of President Mahung's Strategic Plan.

- **To improve the reputation of the University of Belize towards its mission of being THE premier institution of higher learning in Belize.**

"This essentially meant to set it on a firm university footing—an institution of higher learning. In essence, we added on programs never offered before, like medical technology—I remember we used to send one maybe two public officers to England for a year, and I looked at it and realized we could do this in Belize, and in one year we graduated 30. And the Teachers College: We looked at what it was at the time—a teachers' college; we looked at that and developed the Faculty of Education, which is what it now is."

- **To ensure academic rigor and excellence**

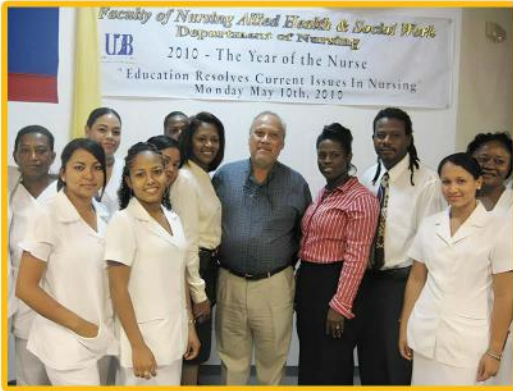
"We not only recruited but trained faculty, got them scholarships etc. And we promoted research, relevant service and outreach. We also leveraged resources for students and faculty through collaboration with external partners, especially COBEC and ERASMUS MUNDUS."

- **To fulfil the student-centered nature of the university:**

- "If you look at the name of that Strategic Plan, it's Transforming the University of Belize: 3000 – 6000. The numbers spoke to growing the student body, from about 1,700 then to 3,000, and looking to the future 6,000: the idea was to grow it into a nationally recognized institution and internationally as well." Note: Today, in 2025, the student body exceeds 5,000, what Dr. Mahung refers to as clearly "a major university."



2024 Graduation for Belize City and Belmopan campuses held at the Belize Civic Center. The student body had grown from 2,300 in 2012 to 5,000-plus in 2024, a realization of the stated vision of going from 3,000 to 6,000 students indicated in the title of President Mahung's 2008-2010 Strategic Plan.



- **To provide countrywide access to university programs**

President Mahung noted this involved ensuring that the demographic profile of the student body closely reflected the multi-diversity of Belize, thus the need to make UB accessible countrywide by going to district students, much like in the distance education models he helped to engineer in the late 1980s-early 1990s. A focus was placed on developing the infrastructure for online learning, then coming into its own worldwide. Equally, in having countrywide demographic reach, a focus was placed on changing the kind of rigid requirement for

entry and exit that excluded harnessing effective practitioners. Thus, embracing and giving credit for mature students' experiences, despite some not having matriculated neatly from primary school certification up through the system, was a path to accessibility. On the flip side, by the time of President Dr. Angel Cal at UB, his Vice-President of Finance and Administration Dr. Alvaro Rosado (deceased June 2024) was testament to the power of harnessing talent and experience; Dr. Rosado always told his story of matriculating with only his primary school certificate and years of experience to go on to receive his Ph.D.

- **To strengthen UB's management system**

Before he was at UB, Dr. Mahung had served in three key positions: executive director of the Belize Institute of Management for several years; Director of Training and Scholarships for the Organization of American States, Permanent Secretary (now called CEOs) of the Ministry of Education, which he credits with enabling him to see the big picture of education in this country. "So, with the experiences garnered, I brought what I thought was a greater management discipline—to administration, human resources, financing, etc." The key transformation here was the direct link now to the whole idea of strategic planning and development.

- **To improve the morale and sense of community among faculty, staff and students**

In particular, several faculty and student demonstrations, primarily to do with salary issues among others, had been occurring during this time.

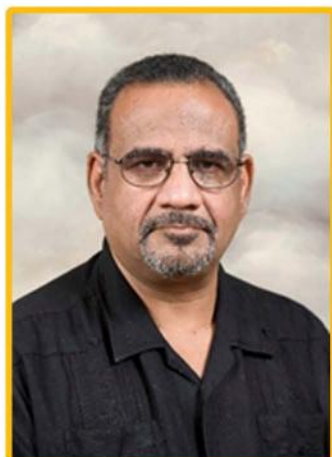
- **To enhance partnerships with the private and public sectors and nationally and internationally with institutions of higher learning**

In fact, it took about nine months to do the strategic plan, based on very extensive consultation with the faculty, the staff, students, the public sector and the business community. Dr. Mahung noted, "We asked the business sector [much as was done at BELCAST and UCB's nationwide public surveys Dr. Cal spoke about, but now directed at these stakeholders]: 'Tell us business sector, what do you want to see in a national university', and so everybody had their say and frankly I think we pretty much captured it for everybody." Indeed, in his remarks in the 2007-2008 UB Annual Report, President Mahung noted: "It is my firm belief that UB is one of the most effective institutional ambassadors Belize has and that the faculty, staff, administrators and students that constitute the immediate UB community will continue to be a driving force in our country's development." Apart from collaborating with partners for scholarship opportunities and exchanges for faculty and students, Dr. Mahung also leveraged networking resources for institutional strengthening. For example, involved in developing UB's first comprehensive strategic plan were stalwart UB partners since the early days of COBEC institutions, a partnership honed from the 1998 inception of COBEC. Dr. Mahung specifically cites "Betty Flinchum, Keith Meisner and others from COBEC for assisting with UB's first comprehensive strategic plan.

THE SUSTAINING YEARS

Dr. Cary Fraser

President: August 2011 – May 2014



"I am very glad to see that UB continues to be focused upon being a contributor to the development of Belize. It has an important part to play in sustaining and accelerating the future for Belize and its population. When I came to Belize to lead the University, I saw similarities between my past experience as a student at the University of Guyana and the role that UB would have to play in furthering the development of Belize. In the context of the contemporary world, UB's role should be focused upon mapping the future of the country's development. A development plan with leadership from the University will provide the skill sets that students/citizens should pursue to ensure the future development of the society. Central to the role of universities in the 21st century is providing the intellectual assets and training across generations that can improve the quality of life for the populations that they serve."

Dr. Cary Fraser trained as a student at the University of Guyana (UG) immediately after graduating from high school, well prepared to pursue his degree in History at UG which allowed him to pursue graduate studies at the St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies and the University of Geneva in Switzerland where he earned the Ph.D. degree.

Dr. Fraser believes in closer collaboration with other Caribbean territories "in matters of developing coordinated strategies for economic development," as he noted in a recent email exchange for this magazine. In particular, regarding tourism and training for that sector, he noted: "Given the markets in North America and the Atlantic region, it would be useful for the countries to collaborate by encouraging joint enterprises among companies from the various countries to be established to secure export markets external to the region."



Equally, Dr. Fraser emphasized in a 2012 speech that education is about personal transformation. Speaking at the Spring 2012 graduation ceremony, President Fraser invited the graduands and audience to keep in mind the following guiding insight from the renowned American civil rights activist Martin Luther King: "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically ... Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education. When we are truly educated, we cultivate a level of intelligence and an awareness of the complexity of life and the choices that confront us in both everyday life and the larger scheme of the world that we have to navigate." President Fraser, Inaugural Address (2011).



During his presidency he led the Strategic Plan: "The Way Ahead – Transforming the University of Belize: Strategic Plan 2011-2015." In her remarks introducing the Plan, then Chairperson of the UB Board of Trustees Mrs. Imani Fairweather-Morrison noted, "This strategic plan reflects extensive conversations, observations and analysis of materials carried out between June 2008 and February 2009." In fact, rather than reinventing the wheel, it is fair to say that Dr. Fraser built upon the extensive faculty and staff consultations that were done during Dr. Mahung's Strategizing Years, as Dr. Mahung recalled (See "The Strategizing Years").

Four directions shaped the goals:

- A1. Fostering a University Culture
- A2. Enhancing Quality of Teaching
- A3. Providing Learning Support Services
- A4. Leading in National Education





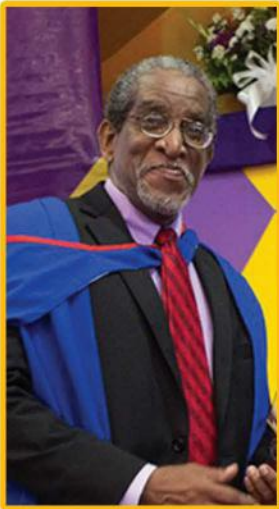
President Fraser signs MOU with Chairperson, San Pedro Junior College, Martha Guerrero

For example, under A4 (A4.06) was the promotion and improvements in primary and secondary school programs to prepare and recruit students for university studies. And, as is seen in A4.03, Dr. Fraser continued to work with developing “academic and institutional policies to facilitate course articulation and transferability between UB and other tertiary level institutions in Belize.” During his presidency, as noted in the 2011-2012 UB Annual Report, UB was populated as follows: 685 total full-time & adjunct faculty, staff, managers, and officers; 4,289 students; 16 Board members.

(R) Dr. Wilma Wright acted as President in the months between President Fraser and President Slusher. She also was Acting Provost (2012-2016) and UB Dean of FEA (2009 – 2012). Dr. Wright also was with legacy institution BTTC and is a part of the transition story. She, her fellow Deans and faculty teams spent countless hours during the Transitional and Tumultuous Years at UB in the early 2000s on what was inarguably one of the most pressing concerns: standardizing course matriculation from feeder institutions—all this among the many “slings and arrows” being fielded because of the rapidity of the start of UB from decision to implementation in 2000. Her impact on countless students and the UB story is truly remarkable. As faculty, Dr. Wright also taught at all UB campuses, particularly enjoying her time at the PG campus. In her own right, she also has contributed tremendously to education in Belize, particularly through her work with Bethel Assembly of God Primary School in Belize City, a school that her father, the late Pastor Lloyd Wright+, helped to start in the late 1960s. She became its General Manager in 2004 until the school closed in 2017. Dr. Wright’s work in education extends beyond UB, Bethel, and BTTC. She also conducted training workshops on teacher education planning through the Ministry of Education and was part of the education curriculum reform of the 1990s with then Cynthia Thompson.



THE MAINTAINING YEARS



Mr. Alan Slusher

President: June 2014 – February 2017

To tail end his remarks in the UB Consolidated Annual Report (2013-2016), President Slusher noted, “As the Report shows in the following pages, despite the challenges, the University maintained good relationships with its external stakeholders, and internal relationships were free from major difficulty. Relations between academic staff and students were generally good; there was strong support from the wider community—especially the business community—for student activities, particularly for internships; and the staff of the University exhibited a considerable degree of understanding and restraint when they were not included in a series of public sector pay increases. I would like to take this opportunity to thank students and staff of the University of Belize, the Minister of Education and the Ministry and its staff, and particularly the Board of Trustees and its Chairman, for their very substantial and sustained efforts to support and advance our national institution of higher learning, and for understanding that it is only through our own individual and collective efforts that we will achieve our shared goals for the development of our country.”

President Alan Slusher; Chairman and Governor of the Central Bank (1986 - 1990); Executive Director, Board of Belize Telemedia; former Senior Advisor, Ministry of Finance; country economist for the Caribbean Development Bank (2001). President Slusher noted as the main goal during this period: “During (2013-2016), the University of Belize sought to consolidate and strengthen its internal operations while intensifying its efforts to improve the quality, coverage and extent of teaching and research activities.”

Major Staffing Challenges

“Staffing the institution adequately, both at the administrative and academic levels, remained the single largest challenge facing the institution throughout the review period (2013-2106) UB met with mixed success in its attempts to fill vacant posts with suitable individuals, reflecting both a shortage of trained professionals in the country as a whole ... and the difficulty facing public sector institutions in meeting the remuneration expectations of an increasingly internationally mobile population. Nevertheless, at the end of the 2016 academic year efforts were substantially advanced to recruit a suitably experienced and qualified President, Provost, and Vice-President,” noted the UB Consolidated Report (2013 - 2016).

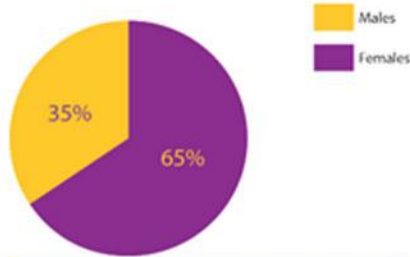
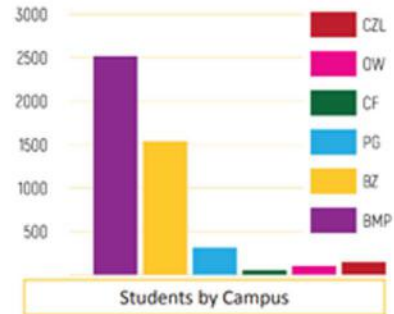
Curriculum Reviews Continue

The 2013-2016 Consolidated Report also stated that the internal effort to complete and operationalize the Institutional Curriculum Review continued. A critical unresolved issue involved the need for independent verification of the academic and teaching performance of students and lecturers. The review also encompassed an evaluation of the financial impact of the recommendations, along with proposals for how UB’s partnerships with educational and other institutions could be strategically utilized to advance both institutional and national interests.



Year in Review - Students

UB Students (2016- 2017)							
Semester	New			Returning			Total
	Full Time	Part Time	Total	Full Time	Part Time	Total	
2016-1	773	445	1, 218	1, 694	1, 789	3, 483	4, 701
2016-2	36	147	183	2,095	1, 870	3, 965	4, 148



Comparison of Males and Females for 2016-1

Scholarships			
	GOB Scholarships		UB Student Scholarships
	2016-1	2016-2	2016-3
	991	837	167
			61

Staying The Course



“As UB travels forward on its chosen course as a multi-location institution committed to excellence, it must embrace its own methods of transformation, evolving towards a truly student-centered institution dedicated to national development.” – from UB Consolidated report: 2013-2016.

(Above) campus maintenance (L-R) FMSS Research Conference with then Dean Dr. Vincent Palacio, President Alan Slusher, Dr. Carla Barnett, and UB Board Chair the late G. Harrison Pilgrim+ .



THE ACCELERATING YEARS

Professor Clement Sankat
 President: February 2017 – July 2021

“Let me congratulate UB and Belize for 25 years. You have grown during this period. You are establishing yourself, rightfully, among the places of national and regional universities. I wish you well in the next leg of your journey. But universities are not built in 10 or 20 or 25 years. Universities are built in 100 years. You have a long journey ahead and I wish you well: Never lose sight of your goals as a university. You are there to meet the needs of the students in the first place—then to meet the needs of the Belizean community, to produce graduates who perform efficiently and effectively in advancing the Belizean cause and move on that new frontier of research, development and innovation. Pursue research on everything that is Belizean. Belize is a fertile ground for research. One of the striking things about Belize is its environmental consciousness, and our ERI, our FST faculty with their natural resource program ... those are stellar things that UB has done that distinguishes itself from Caribbean universities. Congratulations UB! Best wishes for the future!”



- Professor Clement Sankat: CEng, Chartered Engineer, UK; PhD Engineering, 1978, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada; MSc Mechanical Engineering 1975, University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad; BSc Mechanical Engineering (1st Class Hons.) 1972, University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad.



FILLING THE GAPS IN UB'S PROFILE AS A UNIVERSITY

“The message I got when I arrived there [He is from Guyana, lived in Trinidad] was that UB was seen more as a two-year college, an associate degree college. Yes, there were some bachelor's degrees, but I focused on increasing these. I wanted UB to become a full-fledged university We were doing all the things that universities do, in teaching, in learning, in scholarship, in internationalization, in working towards seeking accreditation ... but there were gaps there that had to be filled, and I worked with my wonderful team at UB—wonderful people, management team, and the students! The students were very accommodating, very understanding. I think the students wanted to know that I was raising the profile of UB.” [Picture: Prof. Sankat and his daughter Katyana Sankat, UB alum, Associate degree, Science, 2019 (with Distinction); now a University of Waterloo graduate, Canada, B.Sc. in Environment and Sustainability.]

Professor Sankat noted in a Zoom interview for this magazine: “I am so proud of this moment. Through my daughter, who is a UB alum, I will always be connected to UB.” In fact, President Sankat's connection to UB left a vibrancy still felt even with a casual mention of his name among administrators, faculty or staff. He continued the strategizing of predecessor Dr. Santos Mahung. President Sankat's Strategic Plan of 2017-2022 (“A Transformational Leap: Vision 2022”) brought this vision of transformation into a fully-fledged university to the forefront.

Academic Offerings: A Key University-Status Indicator

- Raising the number of Bachelor Programs vis-à-vis Associate Programs
- UB Master's Degrees-Indigenous rather than affiliated: For the first time, UB's Master's degrees were fully homegrown.

Beautifying and Renovating UB Campuses – Not Just “Paynt Pahn Oal Boad”



Yes, it began with, literally, painting buildings, bordering with UB colors—“a Saturday Morning Lifting UP” borne from “great relationship with staff and students and people. President Sankat inspired the confidence that infrastructural improvement could be done within budget limitations—and it was not just “painting over old boards.” President Sankat raised income to get renovation done and, on the Belmopan campus, two new buildings and a modern a/c building to replace the old dome at the Punta Gorda campus. “I always take the position that when you walk on a university campus, you need to get a sense of the quality of the place,” he says. He particularly thanked Dr. Latha Thomas for her beautification passion. After his first campus visits in 2017, President Sankat immediately prioritized the uplifting of all campuses. “So, when people come onto our campus, both

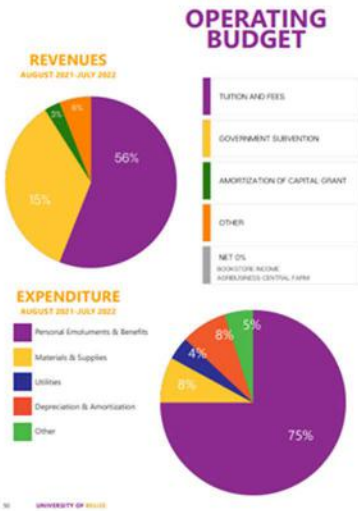
students and visitors, they can say: This Is a small university but a beautiful Belizean campus.” And the Gian Gandhi Building at the Belize City campus is what Professor Sankat proudly calls “a flagship building.” In particular, there is pride in having used Belizean architecture and resources. Above all, there was “passion and fun” in the process, says President Sankat. Notwithstanding that, though, the money had to come from somewhere.



Budget—the perennial bane of practically every university president! Therefore, alternate sources of income become critical in supporting outputs. President Sankat brought his UWI experience to this challenge. “One of our biggest events at UWI in Trinidad was the Principal’s Fete-carnival. It raised millions of dollars and we created an endowment fund to give scholarships to students. But the Fete here was the prelude to the establishment of UB’s Endowment Fund, and it created income and gave scholarships.”

(Above) Conference building (R) President Sankat with UB Black Jaguars paddlers 2nd place 2011-2012 Academic Year.





“We didn’t have a lot of resources, but I used the resources I had—that we GENERATED. These buildings [new conference room and new medical sciences building and labs] were not built with government money—none of them. They were built with income earned.” Under Sankat’s stewardship, the UB Endowment Fund was created to enable the resources for campus upliftment in Belmopan, Belize City and Toledo campuses. [Central Farm has since been uplifted, with new dorms, etc.] “So, we had to be modest about what we did—but reflective of a beautiful campus. We didn’t have multistorey buildings, but we had single storied buildings that were beautifully nestled within the trees and shrubbery of Belmopan.” By the time of Professor Sankat’s tenancy, GOB’s subvention was \$10 million. However, with the pandemic, it got a Covid-cut to \$7 million, with the promise of it being reinstated. As of the date of publication, GOB had raised the subvention by \$1.1 million, bringing the total to \$8.8 million thus far out of the original \$10 million. The UB Faculty and Staff Union had been protesting (See fuller story under Faculty and Staff). ...” [Graphic L: UB’s Operating Budget, 2021-2022. Source: UB Annual Report]

Meeting Budget Shortfalls: Another approach was advancing for Board approval a three-step incremental process to increase tuition/fees that had not been raised in a decade—and communicating with students about this, in large part eliminating the level of student protests when this was broached at earlier points in UB’s evolution. Professor Sankat also reduced budget hemorrhaging by focusing on having income meeting or exceeding expenditure. “Yet another way is “to increase your enrolment,” Sankat noted, echoing President Mahung’s idea behind his own strategic document (See “The Strategizing Years.”). In the final year of his tenure, Professor Sankat left the University with a healthy surplus of \$10 million dollars. He is today the Director of the Guyana Technical Training College Inc., Office of the President , Govt of Guyana, that is being built to provide world class Skills/Technician Training for Oil/ Gas and Hospitality and Tourism Industries.

Yet another financial sustainability approach was the tightening up in Accounts Receivables and a Voluntary Separation Process with benefits for staff who, perhaps, were more of the bent that the University was “an employment bureau. You needed to be pulling your weight,” Said Professor Sankat. In fact, this reduced ancillary staff by 25%. Of note is that the aforementioned Fete Fundraiser also struck another chord—that very Caribbean terminology of “fete” brought the UWI experience of so many UB faculty and Belizean students up front and close, embraced within a Belizean sociocultural context, with famous Belizean musicians and artists hired. For someone like Sankat born and raised on carnival rhythms, this crossover between embracing Belize’s vibrant culture in meeting a practical need (budgeting shortfalls) was an exciting, fun solution.

However, Professor Sankat would be the first to tell you, “We can have a lot of fun, but I make NO compromise when it comes to our programs and our work ethic.” Professor Sankat remembers fondly bringing the UB family together from all campuses for an annual Christmas party in Belmopan and the popularity of the students’ Glow Fete.

The Senior Management Team, 2018





(Above) President Sankat with team at an Accreditation Drive group workshop.

Accelerating Accreditation with SACS: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

The push for seeking accreditation was now solidified with Board mandate, following years of dealing with survival and immediate amalgamation needs. Concerted efforts could be placed on enhancing systems to accelerate the push for accreditation. Professor Sankat brought in a UWI trainer to launch UB's accreditation drive now in a big way with SACS, putting in place to do internal quality review-self review-a first step in the accreditation process ...then came COVID. In latter 2025, UB is submitting to seek to go through SACS for accreditation.

Accelerating Online Preparedness—before COVID—to Increase UB's Reach:

For President Sankat, prioritizing the training of faculty to deliver courses online was driven by the need to extend UB's reach to its various campus sites. This includes the new outreach efforts in the South, now in Independence, as well as to Corozal and San Pedro in the north and northeast. Agreements have been signed with colleges in these areas to launch UB programs locally.

THE COVID YEARS

Professor Sankat credits the ICT Department and the work of persons like Dr. Freida Palma and Dr. Beverly Faber with having lecturers prepared when Covid did in fact hit in March 2020—maybe not yet experienced in actual delivery as they are in 2025, but trained.



Before the decision was taken to step up online use, UB did an online survey to determine how many would have access to both internet and a device, how many had a device but no internet or how many had internet but no device. UB made the decision to plunge into online education because “the vast majority of our students would be able to access in some form online education,” said Professor Sankat. The opportunity was there for students for voluntary withdrawal, meaning students could withdraw without penalty and whatever they may have paid would be held for whenever it was possible for them to recommence, registering for the course without any additional cost.

“An M.Ed. program that was started by my colleagues in FEA, led by a very good Dean, and may his soul rest in peace, Dean Nestor Chan was very successful. Dean Chan was also an educator, an academic, but one who was driven to move his faculty forward. And we had that M.Ed. program also launched in education-training of teachers at a high level-those are things that move us into cementing our profile as a university.”

- Professor Sankat, UB President, the COVID years

Note: Dean Dr. Nestor Chan lost his battle to COVID. We salute him and all who lost loved ones during COVID ++. He was a veteran in the UB family and was himself an alum of legacy institution, Belize Teachers College. Dr. Chan also was one of the UB faculty members who received his doctoral degree through the UB-Nova Southeastern University agreement (See “The Tumultuous Years”).



Budget Affected by COVID

The Government of Belize cut subvention from 10 million to 7 million in 2020. Also, as with many other institutions worldwide and in Belize, some staff were voluntarily separated and compensated. As of mid-2025, GOB and the UB Board have been in discussion about the status of reinstating the subvention (See more on this situation in the section “Active UB Faculty and Staff Union”). Notably, President Sankat had a final request to the then Board of Trustees. This request was made via Zoom in his final meeting (at the tail end of the Covid Period); it was that the faculty and staff emoluments be reinstated given the world was emerging from Covid.

THE MATURING YEARS



Dr. Vincent Palacio

August 2021 - July 2022 (Interim President); August 2022 - Present (President)

“Happy 25th anniversary to my beloved University of Belize. I am extremely proud to serve as the president as we celebrate this milestone—this jubilee milestone. I have a sense of gratitude to all of you who serve us here at the University—all stakeholders, faculty, staff, students, employers out there and entrepreneurs, I give gratitude to them for all that they have done to get us where we are. I think we are positioned to take advantage of whatever the world has for us. Our resilience, our experience—our commitment to meeting national needs: We are ready for the next 25 years. It’s challenging, but it’s a good challenge.”

Dr. Vincent Palacio: Ph. D. Recreation Resources Management, 1998 - School of Forestry, University of Montana, Missoula, Mt.; M.Sc. Health Programming and Faculty Administration, 1991 - Indiana State University, Terre Haute, In; B.Sc. Environmental Health Science, Minor - Chemistry and Biology, 1990 - Indiana State University Terre Haute, In.

The UB Culture Today: Catapulting from the Groundwork of Previous Presidents

“We are where we want to be. The culture is healing after 25 years; when I was appointed as president, we were getting to a point where we had this new University of Belize culture, one that I am sure my predecessors had struggled to achieve. So, when I came in, that culture had started to take shape. And here we are now. We have come together. It was a little easier for me [than with my predecessors] to push with the new UB culture—the university culture. UB began with the amalgamation, which was a bold step to get this university. We had these five different cultures. If I could speak to the agriculture school [a legacy institution]: The students there had to live on campus; they had to get up at 5’oclock to go into the field, as agriculture persons, as farmers would, but that would not be the same case for your students who are doing a degree in business. We had to mix all this together towards establishing this new UB culture.”

Proactive Accessible Approach in Meeting National Needs

“We are being extremely proactive with where we could meet the needs of this growing nation. For example, we are trying to incorporate the on-site tour guide training program online, which will be a big initiative, a big project for the tourism industry, so that tour guides could be wherever they are and still do their training. We are being accessible. We have put a lot of resources into our ODL Unit—that is our Open and Distance Learning Unit.”

– Dr. Vincent Palacio, UB President

Relevance in Meeting National Needs – Being Responsive

Relevance—it’s one of the indicators of the UB identity, “one that shows what role we play as the national university.” President Palacio can readily share clear-cut examples of how UB has been meeting national needs, ranging from research and development endeavors to mediating societal dynamics. Indeed, several such are heralded herein. As well, several UB faculty and administrators also sit on boards and panels that drive national development. A very recent example is that of the July 2025 bus operators discord over representation on the committee for a proposed national bus company. A committee member is from UB, along with others from the bus industry, UNDP, the Attorney General’s Office, several ministries and other organizations (“Discord over” *Amandala Belize*, Jul 25, 2025, p. 2).

“I swear by what we sell here—by what we produce here at the University of Belize.”

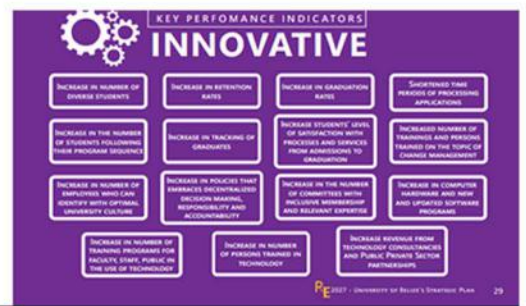
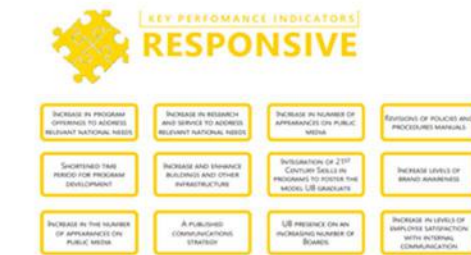
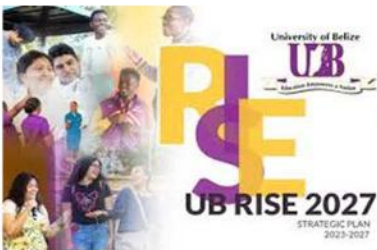
In fact. Dr. Palacio and his wife Loretta have two sons who are at UB: the 23-year old is completing a 2-year English degree and moving to law school in Barbados; the 21 year-old is the only male in the newly established UB School of Medicine (November 2024). Its first cohort of 9 medical students is expected to graduate in 2029.

“I wouldn’t send him anywhere else to do medicine if we are doing it here because I put my name by what we offer and the quality that we provide.”
 - UB President, Dr. Vincent Palacio

Strategic Planning: RISE 2027:
 Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Responsive, Innovative, Sustainable, Excellence

About RISE 2027: “Every good organization needs a strategic plan, and we’ve always had strategic plans in the past. I contribute an effective strategic plan to Dr. Mahung. I remember I was Chair at FMSS when he was president at UB, and I learned a lot from him—the value of strategic planning and how we should go about it.” This time around, capacity at UB was such that “we fully did it internally—we brought three faculty members who brought experience—and experience from doing strategic plans for NGOs, and the like. And there they were, working with us!”
 -UB President, Dr. Vincent Palacio



University of Belize



OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS



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“The whole idea of a university includes the idea of universe: How do we make ourselves relevant to our people in the first instance, but at the same time mindful that we are educating our people for life. It doesn’t matter where they chose to remain; I would hope they want to remain in Belize—but if they choose to go elsewhere, that should be ok. Our degrees should be portable, and they should be able to cope.”

- Dr. Angel Cal, UB’s first president

RECORDS AND REGISTRATION



(L center) Ms. Jacqueline Noralez, a 1991-1992 alum of Belize Technical College and 2003 UB alum, has been a vital part of UB's Records Office, handling student registration, records and transcripts. Indeed, Jackie is not just a part of UB's history—she is a part of Belizean history. In addition to being an avid softball player, she proudly recalls stories that a direct ancestor of her family is Adam Flowers, one of the Flowers Bank 14 who voted to keep Belize as Belize [British Honduras] in 1797. Ms. Noralez has witnessed significant changes in the Records and Registration Office, including the transition from long registration lines to the SMART system in the early 2000s and the current Xenegrade system.

“We have grown. We have improved a lot over 25 years. I can recall in the library we had long lines until 6, 7 in the night. Now students can register, get their grade report, anywhere across the world. Technology has really improved whereby we can communicate with these students across the globe, just by the click of a finger. They are emailing and asking us questions, and we are there to assist them.”

– **Jacqueline Noralez, Records Assistant**



A new UB ID card was introduced in the early years with security features, enabling library access and later online access. As UB's first Registrar Mrs. Enid Oshon noted in a 2003 interview on Channel 5 Belize (Jan. 8, 2003), this office improved because of student input via a survey in 2003: “We need to find out from our students if the services we are offering them is really meeting their needs and we make adjustments based on that.”

(Below L-R) Former Registrars: Dr. Roy Young (Pd.D); Ms. Andrea Middleton (Acting Registrar, Admissions Coordinator); Mrs. Rose Pineda, M.Sc., also a former lecturer and chair at FEA during its early years; Ms. Concepcion Castro (M.Sc.) Registrar (Jan. 2025- Present).

Mrs. Enid Oshon served as the first Registrar; Ms. Amelia Williams also served for a brief period as Registrar.



The Office of the Registrar assists with recruitment. It is responsible for preparing course and exam schedules, dealing with registration and maintenance of the student portal, monitoring grade entry and managing Quicktools, preparing transcripts and letters on behalf of students; verifying degrees and transcripts, preparing graduation clearance and degree preparation, and updating the academic calendar and the University catalog.

STUDENT LIFE: EVOLUTION OVER THE YEARS

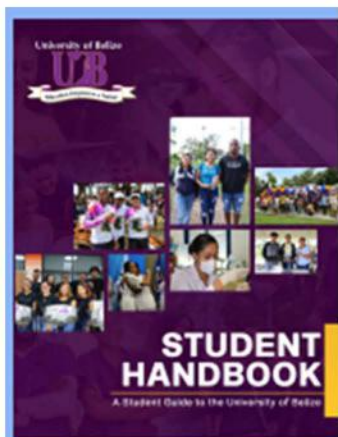
The Office of Student Affairs includes:

- Admissions and Records
- Student Affairs and Student Services
- Wellness
- Physical Education and Sports



August 2001: One year after amalgamation: "I am very proud of the tolerance and understanding that most of you have shown over the past year as you have helped to make our transition a success. The production of this first Student Handbook and Activity Planner marks a change in the quality of life of students at UB. This publication joins others this August that are to provide you with the answers you may have not had in the past. This handbook and planner has been designed with you in mind from start to finish. You should find that it will make your life much easier and more fun."

- Dr. Martin Cuellar, Vice-President of Student Affairs, UB (2000 - 2004); Dean of Student Affairs (2004 - 2006; 2019 - Present)



August 2025: Twenty-five years later, Dr. Martin Cuellar can proudly point to this very UB Student Handbook's own changes in format and content over the years as one of the many indicators of how student life policies, procedures, equity and the like have evolved—a microcosm of Belize's and the world's evolving dynamics and responses to same. Dr. Cuellar is a UB veteran who was there in final days of one of the amalgamated institutions (UCB) in the late 1990s. Critically, he was on the planning and transition teams for UB's establishment, along with persons like Dr. Angel Cal (UB's first president) and Dr. Keith Miser, COBEC consultant.



Similarly, he has seen a span of administrative and procedural changes over the decades. For example, after the immediacy of needs that had to be dealt with in the first year of transition (See President Cal's and President Morter-Lewis's interviews herein), focus shifted to a structure that saw the creation of the positions of Deans. As Dean, Dr. Cuellar visioned, produced and oversaw major improvements in student life, always working with his dedicated team in Student Services. The mantra of a student-centered approach as the fulcrum for any recommendation has always been central, as is always balancing and finetuning the exigencies of often limited budgets for the countless events and opportunities for a well-rounded university student life—whether on campus and now also online.

25 YEARS SINCE ... AAAAAHHH YES, AMALGAMATION.

"I think that our student life started on a great high—and we set the ball in a good place, starting in 2000, because we really believe heavily in the values and the principles of student-centered education. And we knew from then that the concept of student development was surrounded by the principles of participatory learning, values education and teaching and imbuing in our students the core essence of social responsibility. We have had a lot of challenges as to just how we can uphold those very lofty goals and principles over the years. And, yes, the students' experiences from week to week, from month to month, have evolved, especially in how they experience those values."

-Dr. Martin Cuellar, Dean of Student Affairs, University of Belize



The UB Association of Student Governments includes a branch from each campus.



Dr. Cuellar also emphasized in an interview for this magazine several initiatives taken by students over the 25 years that point to engagement in student life beyond the teaching-learning settings. These include student clubs, field visits and research studies with faculty, as well as exchanges with universities and colleges, civic and societal participation.

Dr. Cuellar noted, "One highlight I can recall in our first years: I remember students being in complete resistance, led by the president of the student government down in Belize City when students did not want to move to Belmopan. And so, we worked with students, opening their eyes and even enjoining their hearts to the concept on why the centralized national campus here in Belmopan was a good idea. When we look now, at all of the infrastructure, all of the programs, all of the beautiful, physical environment that coming up here was able to create for our students—it seems like an easy decision; it seems like something that was an automatic give, but in terms of time, it took a lot of work for us to do that."



Dr. Jean
Briceno-Perriott



Mr. William Neal

STUDENT AFFAIRS LEADERS 2000-2025

Dr. Martin Cuellar (2000 - 2004) VP, Student Affairs
 Dr. Martin Cuellar (2005 - 2006) Dean, Student Affairs
 Dr. J. Briceno-Perriott (2006 - 2013)
 Mr. William Neal (2013-2015)
 Mr. Ian Sangster (acting 2016)
 Dr. J. Briceno-Perriott (2017 - 2019)
 Dr. Martin Cuellar (2019 - Present)



“Students first—everything we do is for them and about them. Another big activity was to strengthen our Student Affairs Unit; for example, we recently upgraded the student development center at the Belmopan main campus, which now is an airconditioned space with a cafeteria and a huge patio for lounging with friends. There is also a fulltime psychologist counsellor, a fulltime nurse and constant workshops and seminars and events for our students. “So, again—students first.”

– Dr. Vincent Palacio, UB President



(Far Left) Medical Lab students at Open Day (L) Ms. Kay Menzies, Mr. Lloyd Enriquez, Mr. Steve Spiro, Dr. Cynthia Thompson, UB Asst. Provost at launch of renovated Belmopan Bookstore (R) RLC students 2008



Student Government Leadership and Contributions to National Life

“Our students have always played key roles in the development of the university itself too, both by their leadership on campus and the work they do to improve the quality of students’ experiences every day; for example, in the last three years, student leadership helped us in transforming the Central Farm campus into a vibrant, modern, bustling on-campus dormitory existence, led by 2 dynamic resident assistants.”

– Dr. Martin Cuellar, Dean of Student Affairs

Student government leaders often take student leadership to further endeavors. “It truly is a gratifying feeling—and an impressive indicator of the quality of the UB student,” said Dean Cuellar. One great example is relatively recent: A UB 2017-18 student government president, who ended up becoming the chair of the UB Association of Student Governments went through that experience, “learned a lot obviously, started to make his impact, but at the same time I would say that experience fostered his development into a politician and he is now the deputy mayor of Belize City [2025].”



Alum Adonis MacDonald - UB Student Government advocate; B.A. History, UB-FEA, June 2017; M.Sc. Business Admin., Galen University, Dec. 2024

(L) Adonis is far right, with his E.P. Yorke High School students

“At UB, I was privileged to serve in various student government roles, including Student Advocacy Representative for the Belmopan Campus in 2015-2016, President of the Belmopan

Student Government in 2016-2017, overall Chair of Student Governments and Student Representative to the Board of Trustees. After my B.A., I taught at Saint Ignatius High School in Santa Elena, carrying forward the determination of a UB Jaguar. I transferred to teach at the Belmopan Comprehensive High School, and then to Saint Catherine Academy. I later transitioned to the Belize Police Department, gaining valuable experience before returning to education. I am currently teaching Caribbean History, Social Studies and Belizean Studies at Edward P. Yorke High School while also serving as an adjunct lecturer at UB. Here's to many more years of excellence for the University of Belize! Cheers! Let's continue to build UB Great!”



SPORTS



UB Black Jaguars won the opening Marathon for the Toledo Interoffice Football Tournament 2025

Sports—always a signal part of any university. And then there is the intramural sports program: This type of student engagement IS the university student’s forte! Even during the early tumultuous years of transition, the completion and resourcing of the Jaguar Building (the Gym) occurred under Dr. Morter-Lewis’s presidency, and it allowed proper space for the full development of the UB Jaguars Basketball and Football Teams and later the paddlers for the Ruta Maya. The awarding of Sports Scholarships (driven by Dr. Zabaneh, Board Chair at that time) also began. The Jaguar Gym also is now a graduation and events venue and serves as a hurricane shelter.



Sports comes under the direct supervision of the Department of Student Affairs. Says Dean Dr. Cuellar, “We remember keenly when UB had its first attempt at entering semi-professional basketball. And students rallied around that. I remember faculty and students getting together, and making sandwiches in a boat to take the largest fan group out to San Pedro for the nationals—where we actually won! That was somewhere around 2010-2011. That was clearly an example of how student life had evolved into one that was part of the true UB family—where faculty, students and staff are of themselves not only as equals but as equal agents of change within the university system.”

Second Picture (L-R) Back Row: Mr. Kirk Smith, Mr. Claude “Too Tall” Jones and Mr. Darren Bovell; three former UB coaches



UB BLACK JAGUARS CHAMPIONSHIPS

BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL	VOLLEYBALL	SOFTBALL	CANOING
Female ATLIB Championships 2010, 2012, 2013, 2016, 2018, 2024	Female ATLIB Championships 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2023, 2024, 2025	Female ATLIB Championships 2010, 2012, 2024	Female ATLIB Championships 2014	La Ruta Maya Intramural Champions 2003 - 2008; 2018 - 2020; 2023, 2024
Male ATLIB Championships 2010, 2024	Male ATLIB Championships 2001, 2002, 2011, 2024, 2025	Male ATLIB 2011	Male ATLIB 2014	
Semipro League: 2006 Champions			Co-ed ATLIB Championships 2025	

OUR ALUMNI: THE MOST EFFECTIVE INDICATORS OF THE UB SUCCESS STORY



“What I think of clearly when I attend graduation each year, and as I look out on the sea of purple and gold, I sense and I receive the energy from that large body of Black Jaguars who have been through it all with us—who have allowed us into their homes, into their minds, and who then, turn around and gift us by stepping across the stage into the Belizean society and making their mark.”
- Dr. Martin Cuellar, Dean of Student Affairs

“Our students—they want a job. And I don’t want them to think that they want a job; I want them to think that there are business opportunities in this field, and several of our students have proven that there are business opportunities in this field... pest management is one that comes to mind.”

-Dr. Arleni Rogers, Asst. Professor NRM, and alum, UCB and UB

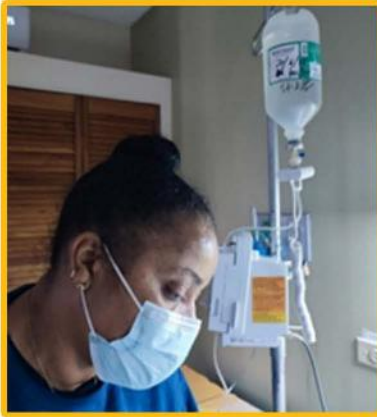
“We continue to push for excellence in our graduates, in our students, so that when they come out, they can hit the ground running ... we are here to produce students for the world of work. We are not here to produce students for the University of Belize, per se, [even though] they make the University of Belize proud.”

- Dr. Bernard Watler, Dean of the FMSS Faculty

“What has emerged in these 25 years is an institution that has the respect of citizens; it has the respect of other international institutions. I would like to make an appeal to the many UB graduates since 2000 [over 18,000]: The university is still building. It is critical that UB gets the support it needs from all Belizeans, but more so from those who have had the benefit of its services. We need our graduates—we really do need them. They can lobby for the university in many ways.”

- Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis, UB’s longest serving president

ALUM LAVERN BANNER FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES



Practical Nurse Certification: UB-2005
Midwifery Certification: UB-2010
Nursing: expected Bachelor's UB-Oct. 2025

It is with pride that UB claims this alum, who patiently and with loving and professional care, will gently place a straw in the right side of an elderly patient's mouth because she sees the patient slightly wince when it is placed in the left side—all the while speaking in a soft soothing voice.

(L) Picture of Lavern attending the patient was taken with the permission of the patient, June 2025.

She hails from Lemonal, the heart of custard apple country in the Belize District. After her Practical Nursing certification at UB in 2005, Lavern went to work at KMHM for four years. During that time, she was also doing the Midwifery certification program at UB in Belmopan. And then—beautiful blessings—Lavern became the mommy of two beautiful children, Chastity and Cassidy. After Chastity finished sixth form, Lavern came back to UB for her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (due October 2025). For the past five years, she has been part time night shift at Belize Medical Associates (BMA), whom she credits with supporting her studies not only with a salary, but also with shift changes and the like. Her substantive job is as a midwife, Ministry of Health in Orange Walk, where she lives. Lavern has been in the UB system since 2002 when she began her journey; clearly she is a part of the UB family! Lavern says her UB ID number has stayed the same, a 3-digit number from 2002. Today, new intakes receive a 10-digit ID number—indeed, a point that speaks to the growth of UB! Equally, she saw the UB Belmopan bus shuttle cost go from \$3 dollars in early 2000s to \$6 in 2010. Today it is \$8 dollars.



"I began wanting to do social work," says Lavern. But friends convinced me to do nursing—and I love it! In addition to caring for my patients, I care a lot about keeping my skills up to date. Thank you UB and congratulations on 25 years!"

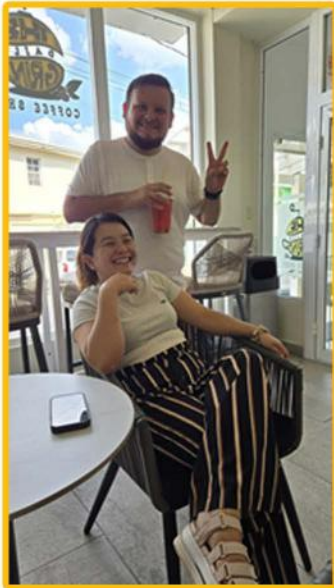
ALUM ABIL CASTEÑEDA

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



Associate's degree: **UB-2008**
 Bachelor's degree: **UB-2010**

Abil is a proud alum of UB's Tourism program in the Faculty Management and Social Sciences! When he participated in a recruitment video the Office of Student Affairs created a few years ago, he was then Director of Quality Management, Capacity Development, Cruise and Registrar of Hotels, BTB. In 2023, he represented Belize in Rwanda at the global tourism summit (WTTTC) regarding post pandemic tourism reflections, global trends and issues.



In November 2024, he joined the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) as its new executive director. Notably, Abil had also served as the representative for the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations on the PACT Board. Truly, Abil Casteñeda is a strategic contributor to national development, as the official PACT release at the time of his appointment November 2024 indicated: "Mr. Castañeda has been a key player in Belize's sustainable development over the past decade, especially through his work in tourism, cultural development, and natural resource management over 13 years of public service His various roles at the Ministry of Tourism include Project Liaison Officer, Tourism Officer, Chief Tourism Officer, and acting Chief Executive Officer. He also served as the Director of Cruise, Capacity Development, Quality, and Registrar of Hotels at the Belize Tourism Board." Said Abil in the Ub recruitment video: "One thing I like about my job is that it is a very dynamic industry that we work in. It is very people-driven, so you have to work with persons on a daily basis, and in different scenarios. ... I have always grown up with the sense of civic pride, and I come from a background of very environmentally conscious parents. In my off time, I dedicate to my family. I have a wonder, beautiful wife Wendy and two children." Abil's children are Uoni and Aini Casteñeda, a boy and a girl. In fact, UB also is where Abil met his beautiful wife Hsin Ju Lai (Wendy), herself a UB alum in Accounting. And from this proud UB alum of 2010, in his own words:



"I am a proud UB Black Jaguar; I invite anyone who seeks to expand their horizon—build a professional career in various disciplines and areas of work—to join the UB Family. Congrats on 25 years, UB!"

ALUM CARINA CAL

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Associate degree: UB - 2015

Bachelor degree (Chemistry): UB Expected Graduation 2026

She became Belize's first female brewer when she became the Junior Head Brewer of the Microbrewery at the Belize Brewing Company. Carina Cal graduated from the University of Belize in 2015 with a major in Biology and Chemistry. As of November 2024, she was promoted to Head Brewer, now overlooking craft and commercial brewing, as well as the microbrewery.



"UB was instrumental in providing me with the techniques and skills that I use up to this day. They provided me with a solid background in biology, chemistry and food sciences. At UB I also extended my social circle as I was part of the UB Chemistry Club. There I created very good friendships, and I built and fostered good relationships with my lecturers and mentors. To this day, I apply these skills and attitudes to my work environment, which makes it easier and fun to work with people of different backgrounds, internationally and nationally."



Carina also participates in the cultural sport, known as "hip ball" or pok-a-tok, managing a team in Yo Creek Village, which is one of the few female teams that play this ancient cultural sport. In a text message for this magazine, Carina also noted, "I also love spending time with my family and with my one-year-old daughter, Keanna."



"I encourage young women and men to enrol in the Faculty of Science and Technology, and the many other options that the University of Belize has. As Belize's first female brewer, I feel fortunate and honored to inspire young ladies to follow their dreams and to take on roles that are traditionally held by men. I am also a volunteer, mom and proud Black Jaguar! Congratulations, UB, on 25 years!"

EXAMPLES OF SCHOLARSHIPS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS



Two of several examples of scholarships from private individuals are the Lorenzo Cacho Memorial Scholarship and the Cornelius Cacho Grant to the UB Endowment Fund dedicated to student scholarships. The latter is for US\$68,000. (L) the late Mr. Cornelius Cacho+

The Inaugural recipients under this were seven bachelor degree students in fields like Pharmacy, Medical Laboratory, Biology, Applied Agriculture, Chemistry and Information Technology. Then President Sankat thanked Mr. Cacho “for his philanthropy to the University of Belize and assisting our students with the resources needed to make positive changes in their lives (Below: students at UB Scholarship Opportunities Fair 2014)



April 12, 2005 in *San Pedro Sun*: Under the theme “Building Our Future Together,” then President Morter-Lewis explained to an audience in San Pedro, Belize that even though the university is subsidized by the GOB, thus making it less costly than other institutions, there are still many students in Belize who simply cannot afford the enrolment fees. She said the current enrolment of the university was at 2,300 students of which one third were full time students and that UB had a staff of about 103 members with a faculty made up of 96

educators. She explained that the university’s current drive to raise funds for the 50 scholarships were mainly targeting areas of needs such as agriculture, nursing and national research management. She also spoke about UB signing Memorandums of Understanding with various international institutions and universities, such as the University of Houston in Texas, the Smithsonian Institute and the University of Bremen, in Germany. She said that the University of Houston had already provided twelve scholarships for UB students.

For more information on scholarships at UB, contact:
scholarships@ub.edu.bz or 822-3680 ext. 210.

UB collaborates with University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA on summer research 2016

Four UB students from the biology program got the opportunity to shadow two Graduate students from Eck Institute of Global Health, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA this summer—the second such research collaboration which started in 2015 when six UB Bachelor Biology students benefitted from a similar research opportunity. (L to R Front Row) 2016 Notre Dame summer exchange: Donovan Leiva, Ema Juchim, Olivia Ahearn, Victoria Wadman, Ansella Rodriguez (Back Row) Aspiro Urbina, Marla Magana, Melissa Robinson



VP ACADEMIC/ PROVOST OFFICE



Ph.D. Sherlene Enriquez-Savery
UB Vice President (Academic Affairs)
(2021 – current)

Ph.D. in Mathematics and Statistics from the University of South Florida;
 former Dean of UB's Faculty of Science and Technology

The title of the head overseeing academics at UB over the years has evolved from Provost to today's Vice President of Academics under whose portfolio falls the four UB Faculties, the Toledo and Central Farm campuses, the RLC, Records and Admission, Student Affairs, Quality Assurance and Open and Distance Learning.

VP Dr. Enriquez-Savery tells students in part of her online welcome message: "We are committed to delivering programs that meet the diverse needs of our population through flexible delivery methods—whether online, face-to-face or blended learning approaches." As she further points out, "To better serve our diverse student population, we are enhancing our online course offerings and working toward providing complete online."

Indeed, as VP Enriquez-Savery concludes in her message, "The journey on which you have embarked is an exciting one and I am glad that we are embarking on this journey with you. Learn, enjoy yourself, make new friends and develop lifelong relationships."



(Left) Mr. Henry Anderson, UB's first designated Provost (2003-2006), speaking in this picture at a 2025 UB-BELPRI event.

Chief Academic Officers (Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs) 2000 2025

Period	Names	
2003 – 18 Aug 2006	Mr. Henry Anderson	<p>Notes: 2000 - 2003: Dr. Omitade Adediran and Dr. Dorian Barrow served in the position of VP Academic Affairs/Provost.</p> <p>Mr. Anderson was the first named as Provost. Dr. Angel Cal was appointed for a one-year term.</p> <p>Dr. Wilma Wright served as Interim/Acting Provost through the 2012 16 period.</p> <p>Dr. Mariot Simon was appointed as Vice President of Academic Affairs, which also fulfilled the provost's duties.</p> <p>The current Vice President of Academic Affairs is the role that now carries the provost's remit.</p>
18 Aug 2006 – 26 Jun 2008	Mr. Marco Olsen	
26 Jun 2008– Mid 2009	Dr. Angel Cal	
2009 – May 2012	Dr. Ismael Hoare	
May 2012 – 2016	Dr. Wilma Wright (Interim)	
Apr 2017–Oct 2021	Dr. Mariot Simon	
Aug 2022– Present	Dr. Sherlene Enriquez Savery	

FACULTY

UB 2010 FMSS Alum featurette Abil Castañeda, Executive Director PACT 2025, recalls, “The one thing I really liked about UB is that it allowed you to find yourself—find your own career path. The lecturers there provide excellent guidance, not only in your career, your academic life, but also in looking forward to a future life in the profession that you choose.” (See his story herein.)



Alum featurette in Nursing, Lavern Banner, fondly remembered “Mavis Moody, Cynthia Guild, Thelma Jones, Matthew Martinez, Ms Lily Mahung and Lorita Haylock: “I credit these great lecturers with being my mentors,” said Lavern in the wee hours of around 3 a.m. in ward at her parttime night shift at BMA: They were more than teachers—they were mentors to me—pushed me to excel.” (See her story herein.)

It is truly with pride that UB has seen many of its alumni from UB itself and from its legacy institutions go on to further studies and return to become lecturers and/or deans and directors at UB. Each of UB’s four faculties and some of its institutes can attest to this. Some of these faculty have been pointed out elsewhere; below, we feature two alums, now UB lecturers, from legacy institutions. First is Dr. Kevin Tucker of the Faculty of Education and Arts.

(R) Dr. Kevin G. Tucker: 1998 UCB, Bachelor's in Secondary Education (English); 2007: Master's in Adolescent Education, Kennesaw State University (KSU); 2016: Doctor in Higher Education and Organizational Leadership, Nova Southeastern University (NSU). Dissertation: “The Impact of a Service-Learning Program on Primary Education Pre-service Teachers at the University of Belize.”



“From its genesis in August 2000 to now, twenty-five years later, I have had the privilege of witnessing the University of Belize slowly evolving into a unique academic institution with its own identity, culture and brand. Born from the merger of five distinct institutions, UB has steadily harnessed the strengths of its roots to establish itself as the national university of Belize. The original visionaries of the University aspired to create a center of excellence to serve the nation’s developmental needs. Today, there is clear evidence that this vision is being realized. Our graduates have been accepted into reputable universities around the world and into key positions within the national and regional workforce, a testament to the academic standards maintained at UB. While the journey has not been without challenges, the University continues to adjust, improve and rise to meet the demands of an ever-evolving global and national context. There is still work to be done, but without a doubt, we are on the right path—and we are getting there. Congratulations UB!”

-Dr. Kevin Tucker, FEA



Another UB veteran educator and cultural dynamo—and alum of two legacy institutions! When she isn't teaching or assisting students, she is either being with her two beautiful daughters, Angelia and Alexis, or giving “tea-dinner-tea” of her personal time to community service.



In the picture (R) 2023: She is volunteering at Flowers Bank Day in 2023. She is Adelia Young, Faculty of Science and Technology. M.Sc., Nova Southeastern University, FL: degree awarded Feb. 2016: Cognate in Math Education; 1996-1998: University of North Florida, M.Ed. Cognate in Special Education; 1990-1992: B.Sc. University College of Belize, Math Education; 1986-1988: Belize Technical College: Associate degree, Math and Physics; AEB (Associated Examining Board: pass in Physics).



“Ms. Young, you are an amazing lecturer Your dedication to your students You've always gone above and beyond to help your students, whether that meant staying back to explain a topic again. I'm truly grateful to have been taught by you. I was always one of the students who made it a point to register for any math courses by you because I knew I would never leave the class without learning something meaningful. You've left a mark on my journey that I'll never forget, and I truly mean it when I say: You are one of the best at UB. You deserve to be celebrated ... the countless lives you've touched, including mine.”

- Jerika Martinez (in picture with Ms. Adelia Young), UB Alum, Bachelor of Science in Mathematics Education (2020)

“Congratulations to the University of Belize on this milestone. A little over twenty-five years ago, I was there at all those meetings and training sessions in preparation for the amalgamation. As a former employee of the Belize Technical College, one of the five amalgamated institutions, I note that the journey was rough at times but through it all UB made it to mark this 25th anniversary. Congratulations once again!”

- Adelia Young, UB-FST senior lecturer

Now, in 2025, President Vincent Palacio, looking back at the transitional and tumultuous years of which he himself was a part, can indeed see that 2000 seedling maturing. “On the academic side, one thing to note is that we are very inclusive in how we make decisions. We try to involve faculty and staff at every level All academic deans and the student affairs dean now are a part of senior management. That brings more feedback. That helps to ensure that we are hearing the concerns of faculty and staff.” The pressing concerns of President Cal's and President Morter-Lewis's earlier years of achieving equity in amalgamated pay scales, of head scratching over equity and flexibility in early transition credit matriculation decisions—those days are largely over with and, when and if faced with a new equivalency decision, systems are in place to determine procedure.

SOME OF THE UB FACULTY OVER THE YEARS: OUR VOICES OF KNOWLEDGE, OUR HANDS AND FEET, AND OUR CONSCIENCE OVER THE YEARS!



Ongoing training opportunities for faculty as part of Continuing Professional Development occur regularly, particularly in keeping up with technological platforms in the delivery of teaching and conducting of research and service. A concerted effort begun during President Sankat's tenureship culminated when UB's faculty and staff mandatory retirement option was raised to 60 from 55 for persons with pensionable posts (UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2019), with Early Retirement at 55 now an option. Under Professor Sankat, the dormant Faculty Assessment and Promotions Committee was also revitalized.

UB's Open and Distance Learning Unit and UB's Information, Technology and Communications Unit have been integral in the supporting faculty with being kept up to date with the latest technological teaching and learning platforms.



University of Belize
UB
Education Empowers a Nation

**FACULTY E-LEARNING
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COURSES**
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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

UB: A Teaching or Research University?

“Research is an important academic function. I’ve been asked, are we a teaching university or are we a research university? And I say, do we have to be either? Why not be both? We have to do research. It is a requirement for all of our faculty with terminal degrees.”

- President Vincent Palacio



To assist faculty in doing research, UB has:

- A research office
- A research publication outlet
- A small grants seed research faculty budget

The office's director is Dr. Joyanne De Four-Babb; the office is staffed by two and offers several workshops and several seminars, continuing to build UB's research culture. The journal has been reinstated post Covid. The BELCAST Journal of Belizean Affairs, evolved into the UCB journal and today into the UB Journal of Belizean Research. Local faculty and staff, or any researcher, has a local place to submit to publish their research.

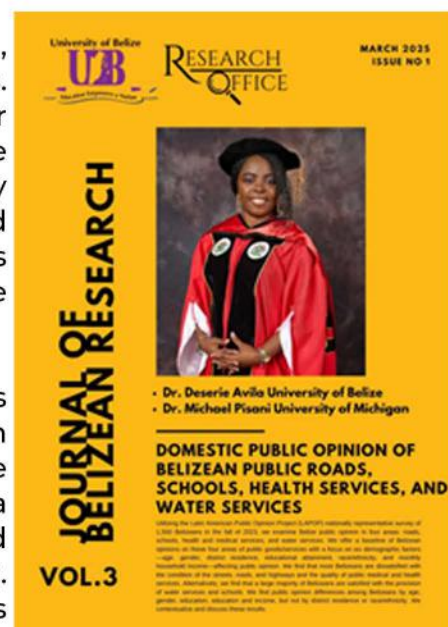
Dr. Joyanne De Four-Babb, Director, UB's Research Office

Dr. De Four-Babb was appointed as the Research Director in March 2024; she served as Interim Research Director (January 2023 to March 2024) and four years as an Assistant Professor at UB-FEA. She is currently the co-Chair of the Caribbean and African Studies in Education, Special Interest Group (86) of the American Educational Research Association (2020—2023). Dr. De Four-Babb is a doctoral Commonwealth Scholar. Her doctorate is from the University of Waikato, Hamilton New Zealand.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB): Critical for Research

UB also has instituted an IRB, Institutional Review Board, required especially when working with human subjects. Faculty's research and publications count towards their ongoing academic requirements as a faculty member at the University—without even leaving the University. Faculty members can apply for funding and receive up to six thousand dollars (\$6,000) to support their research endeavors. This amount often serves as seed grant, enabling them to secure additional funding from other sources.

Encouraging cross-faculty research: One example of this: UB's School of Medicine with the UB Agricultural campus in cross-faculty studies vis-à-vis Belize's high hypertension rate with nutrition and food practices and production. Dr. Lisa Johnson, Dean of UB's School of Medicine, is especially excited at this aspect of collaborative research. UB President Dr. Palacio noted the example with Pharmacy: “There is a class that has students go out and develop a product from our natural resources. It could be animal research, or plant research; so, they are taking advantage of this natural lab—and they are working with our agriculture program in terms of food production, and what types of food for what ailment.



In February 2025, The UB Research Office gained an EU Grant for 302,000 Euros (95% EU Funding) to conduct a three-year project entitled “Strengthening Human Right Advocacy Among Youth in Belize Through Academic Research, Capacity Building and Human Rights Education.”

RESEARCH FEATURE

NRM – SEA CUCUMBERS



“I am excited to see a lot of new developments at UB; there is technology. We can do a lot more than when I was a student in 1996 when I started at then UCB—and when I graduated in 2000 in the first NRM graduating class at the new UB. Congratulations, UB!”

- **Dr. Arleni Rogers:** Ph.D. Marine Affairs and Marine Resource Management (National Taiwan Ocean University, 2010); M.Sc. Natural Resource Management (University of the West Indies, 2004); B.Sc. Biology (University of Belize); Associates Natural Resource Management (University College of Belize, 1999). She is an assistant professor at FST in Natural Resource Management and in Biology.



Dr. Rogers has done studies with UB's ERI and NRMP colleagues and students in groundbreaking sea cucumber research. She noted in an interview for this magazine: “The sea cucumbers studies we have done include looking at the biology, socioeconomics and reproductive cycle of sea cucumbers. They are exported from Belize, primarily to the Asian markets in the world.”



Impact on National Development: UB Research Achieves Legislative Change

“Sea cucumber, like any other fishery, is very important. It contributes to employment; it contributes to exports—foreign exchange. Sea cucumbers are primarily eaten. We have to protect them,” she urged.

Perseverance

“We have contributed to the protection of this species by doing a reproductive cycle study with my students—and I love it.” Dr. Rogers recalled reaching out to the Fisheries administrator and to the Ministry CEO, “and eventually they responded.” The Government of Belize amended the legislation in 2022 to protect the reproductive cycle. “And I am so proud that all these students were involved! Several of them went on trips, doing fieldwork with the fishermen and myself. We went to the laboratory to do microscopic slides, and we published work and eventually achieved legislative change”

- Dr. Arleni Rogers

Dr. Arleni Rogers and other faculty and students in UB's ERI and NRMP have also been involved in plastic recycling public outreach. For more on this, see news coverage of Nov. 20, 2024:

<https://www.greaterbelize.com/recycling-plastics-less-hazardous-on-the-environment/>

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



“As Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, I proudly join in celebrating the University of Belize’s 25th Anniversary. In just a quarter century, UB has helped shape the national mindset, contributed significantly to Belize’s development and empowered its people through education and innovation. Our graduates continue to drive progress across sectors, while the University leads in impactful research through initiatives like the Journal of Belizean Research and the Internal Research Fund Awards. The launch of graduate programs and upcoming reforms signal even greater promise. UB’s upward trajectory is evident, and the Belizean public is taking notice. Congratulations, UB, on this milestone!”

-Dean Apolonio Aguilar: Ph.D. and master’s degree: Organic Chemistry, University of Texas at Austin; dual Bachelor’s degree, Honours: in Biology and Biochemistry, Regis University; an Assistant Professor of Chemistry. Previously: Chair of the UB-FST Science Department. Research focus: synthetic and supramolecular organic chemistry, including the design and synthesis of expanded porphyrins for nuclear waste remediation and anion sensing and recognition.



Building Research Capacity

FST is strengthening its research infrastructure and output through strategic partnerships and international funding. Notable collaborations:

- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- Ocean Country Partnership Program (OCP)

These partnerships have supported the establishment and equipping of the Hummingbird Analytical Laboratory (HAL), a vital facility for soil and water testing that serves the agriculture and environmental conservation sectors. FST also maintains strong research collaborations with global universities such as:

- Mercer University, Auburn University, Columbia University, Stockholm University
- ECOSUR and UQROO (Mexico). FST co-organizes the **Annual Belize-Mexico Binational Seminar**

PROMOTING RESEARCH CULTURE

In alignment with the University's mission to enhance scholarly activity, several FST programs have been revised to include a strong research component. The goal is to generate publishable work for outlets such as the *UB Journal of Belizean Research*. Support for this research is further strengthened through local partnerships. The Department of the Environment contributes funding via the Environmental Management Fund (EMF) to support research aligned with environmental priorities. Also see: NRM Research feature on sea cucumbers herein.



FST Lecturers Conduct Water Quality and Dung Beetle Research in Billy Barquedier National Park 2018. FST lecturers, Mr. Josue Ake, Ms. Karen Bautista and Dr. Latha Thomas completed a yearlong study on water quality and dung beetle research in the Billy Barquedier National Park, in Stann Creek District. The study was done in collaboration with Steadfast Tourism and Conservation Association (STACA) who manages the National Park. A funding of BZ\$ 38,000 was received for the research from Belize Nature Conservation Foundation (BNCF).

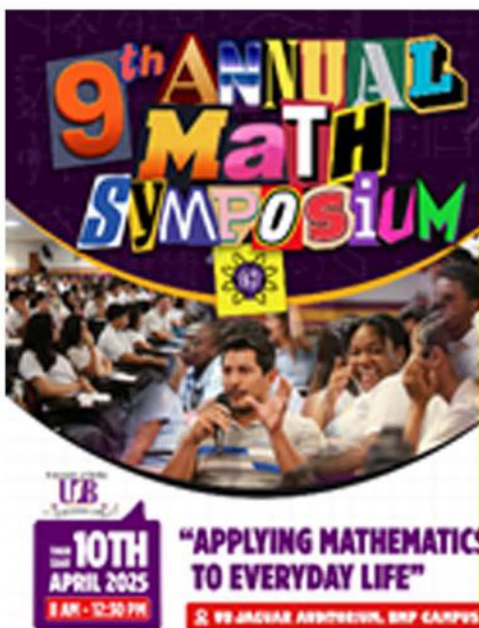


UB Faculty Participates in 2018 Training Course on Microplastic Analysis Using MIRS Technique

FST's Dr. Abel Carrias participated in a Training Course on Microplastic Analysis by using MIRS Technique carried out at the Laboratório de Radioecologia e Alterações Ambientais, Instituto de Física, Universidade Federal Fluminense – UFF, between 13 August 2018 and 17 August 2018, in Niteroi - RJ – Brazil. The participation of Dr. Carrias in this meeting arose from his involvement in IAEA TCP project Regional project RLA7022 Strengthening Regional Monitoring and Response for Sustainable Marine and Coastal Environments (ARCAL CXLV). The training contributed to the development of UB's capacity to perform studies on microplastics and to assess its impact on marine ecosystems.

Academic Research Events

Example: Mathematics Symposium in April; Science Symposium in May: These events are critical for building students' professional networks and exposing them to current developments in science and technology.





Professor Thippy Thiagarajan (in orange shirt) with FST students in field



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC EVENTS

Connecting students with external stakeholders, showcasing research, innovations and hands-on projects.

Key events: Macaroni Competition (Architecture & Civil Engineering) in November; GIS Day, FST Open Day, Central Farm Open Day, Earth Day in April.

State-of-the-Art Student Resource Spaces: FST offers students access to specialized labs and studios that provide practical experience with current technologies.



Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Laboratory: Equipped with ESRI Suite including ArcGIS, Multispectral and standard drones; used across programs such as NRM, Climate Smart Agriculture, Marine Biology, Civil Engineering, Criminology, etc.

Hummingbird Analytical Laboratory (HAL)

For environmental toxicology: Direct Mercury Analyzer (DMA-80), mercury analysis UV-Vis Spectrophotometer (HACH DR6000); water and soil testing; Gas Chromatograph - detecting pesticides and pest resistant organic pollutants; Micro-FTIR and ATR-FTIR Spectroscopy – analysis (microplastics & plastics); ocean acidification monitoring equip.

- **JaguarTech Studio:** A robotics and drone programming space for IT students, featuring robotic arms, aerial drones
- **ETAP Power Laboratory** (Launching under its new name in August 2025) Offers ETAP Suite, Autodesk Suite (AutoCAD)
- **SolidWorks:** 3D Printers in engineering design-modelling
- **India-Belize Center for Engineering (IBCE):** Provides workshops for practical training in Electronics, Welding, Carpentry and Materials Testing.

DEANS OF FST SINCE 2000

2000 - 2003	Dr. Joseph Iyo	2014-2015	Dr. Pio Saqui
2003 - 2008	Dr. Aaron Lewis	2015 - 2020	Ms. Julianne Pasos
2008 - 2012	Dr. Thippi Thiagarajan	2020- 2021	Dr. Sherlene Enriquez-Savery
2012 - 2014	Dr. Joaquin Urbina	2021 - PRESENT	Dr. Apolonio Aguilar

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (FMSS)

"We continue to be dynamic! I would certainly like to congratulate the University of Belize on its 25th anniversary. When it comes to the development of Belize, you will see our students in every region of our country. In every industry of our country, our students are the driving forces behind economic development. Long live the University of Belize!"

-Dr. Bernard Watler, Dean of FMSS

Ed.D, Organizational Leadership and Higher Education, Nova Southeastern University (2012); MPA, Valdosta State University (1994);UCB alum: B.Sc. (1992); BTC alum (1989)



On the University's FMSS Welcome page, Dean Watler summarizes the role of FMSS as "providing students with a solid business education that will allow them to excel in this new knowledge-driven business environment in order to keep pace with the region and the rest of the world. Consequently, we continue to collaborate with industry and employers to remain relevant and produce graduates that are competent and employable." Professor Clement Sankat distinctly recalled the passion and sterling leadership of Dean Bernard Watler (who was on the UB transition team and is himself an alum of legacy institution BTC): "I recall the work done by Dean Watler and his staff in Belize City to put on the MBA program. He used some support from the Sagikor Cave Hill School of Business and Management. That was a tremendous success. One of my most pleasurable moments was the 2019 graduation ceremony, where we had the first homegrown MBA graduates from the University- the first master's graduates from UB, 19 of them, because that MBA program became very successful."

-President Professor Clement Sankat

"We tailor our programs to make sure that we meet those specific skill sets and those competencies that employers out there are looking for in our graduates. We've partnered with large and small businesses in Belize over the years, in particular our internship programs, so we can bridge the gap between the theory that they learn in the classroom and the practical that is required in the world of work."

FMSS: National and International Partnerships

"In one internship program, our tourism students would go on an internship abroad at Disney, in Florida. When they returned, they would tell you that it worked wonders for them, in terms of opening up their eyes to things they had not seen before. So, we continue to form linkages like that, to give our students that kind of international exposure ... not only our students, but also our lecturers for them to go on exchanges abroad, for them to come back with new ideas, again, to infuse into the classroom and into their lesson plans, etcetera."

- Dean Dr. Bernard Watler





Mr. Geban was the first FMSS Dean at UB (2000-2005) and was instrumental in faculty-staff FMSS relations during the early years. He continues at UB today as a senior lecturer. A longtime member of The Belize Audubon Society, Mr. Geban is also its current president.

(Above center front row, white shirt) Mr. Kevin Geban with students at the Fort Street Tourism Village 2010



(Above) UB/LIU 2025 FMSS Symposium: Youth in Peacebuilding: Empowering Change through Restorative Justice

“The UB/LIU (Leadership Intervention Unit) 2025 symposium fostered an inclusive and interdisciplinary dialog among students, scholars, practitioners and community leaders, highlighting the collective potential of youth-driven peacebuilding through engaged participation and shared insight.”

-Dr. Aveka Mano, Assistant Professor of UB Criminal Justice and Criminology, UB-FMSS

DEANS OF FMSS: 2000 -2025			
2000-2005	Mr. Kevin Geban	2020 AUG – 2021 JAN	Dr. Gilroy Middleton
2005-2010	Mr. Fatai Akinkoulie	2021 JAN – 2021 JULY	Dr. Vincent Palacio
2010-2015	Dr. Vincent Palacio	2021 AUG – 2022 JULY	Dr. Somanadevi Thiagarajan
2015-2020	Dr. Bernard Watler	2022 AUG – PRESENT	Dr. Bernard Watler

The main building at the FMSS campus in Belize City was renamed the Gian Gandhi Building. UB also established the Gian Gandhi Lecture Series. On March 5, 2025, it hosted its 5th lecture at the Jaguar Auditorium , Belmopan campus. The keynote speaker was the Hon. Christopher Coxe, on the topic “ The Current State of the Belize Economy and the Outlook for the Future.” (See herein for more on Gian Gandhi.)



FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND ARTS (FEA)

"This jubilee year marks a moment of pride and reflection on all that we have accomplished together. As Dean of the Faculty of Education and Arts, I am honoured to extend heartfelt congratulations to UB. This remarkable milestone stands as a testament to UB's unwavering dedication to shaping minds and building our nation. Over the past two and a half decades, UB has not only produced educators but also changemakers—individuals who have gone on to teach in classrooms, lead in ministries, work in museums, preserve our cultural heritage and serve communities across Belize, with our teachers being central to national development. We remain committed to preparing the next generation of educators, journalists, historians and leaders who will continue to uplift and empower Belize for generations. Here's to 25 years of meaningful impact—and to many more ahead!"

- Dr. Thisbe Lucas-Usher, Dean, Faculty of Education and Arts



Dr Lucas-Usher: D.Phil. Education (Curriculum), UWI; M.Sc. Education (Advanced Teaching and Learning), University of North Florida; B.Sc. (Primary Education) University of Belize; 19 years teaching and administrating at the primary school level; joined UB as adjunct then full-time 2015, administrated UB's Early Childhood Stimulation Center; served as the Education Department Chair; Lifelong passion: the continuous professional growth of teachers and commitment to helping all teachers reach their fullest potential.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: HIGHLIGHTS



EU-Funded Banana Belt and Sugar Belt Teacher Training Projects: In 2012, UB's FEA partnered with the Ministry of Education and the European Union (EU) in responding to national needs in teacher training. The EU funded the Secondary Teacher Education Project (STEP) in Belize's Banana Belt region, specifically in the southern Stann Creek and Toledo districts. The project focused on increasing the capacity of TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) managers and instructors to deliver quality training to students.

Since the 2012 initiative and its graduates, another program was implemented in 2016, again EU-funded, to address the shortage of trained teachers in the northern region of Belize. Both programs adopted a job-embedded training model, allowing teachers to apply new skills and knowledge directly in their classrooms. The program trained Early Childhood and Secondary School teachers in the Orange Walk and Corozal districts, with sensitization workshops for parents.



FEA lecturer, the late Shaun Rhaburn+, assisted with the start up of the online segments.



Banana Belt students; the University taking education to the people

MASTER'S IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP (MEDL) PROGRAM: JANUARY 2019

FEA launched its first homegrown graduate-level program, the online Master's in Educational Leadership (MEDL) with two cohorts in Orange Walk and Belmopan, developed in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the Belize Government with an inaugural cohort of 37 students (12 males and 25 females). To date [2025], three cohorts have graduated.



Annual Competency-Based Trainer of Trainers (ToT) Professional Development Workshops: The National Curriculum Framework is mandated for use within Belize's Pre-primary and Primary schools, which emphasizes Competency-Based Education (CBE). To support this, FEA, in partnership with MoEST and The University of Texas at Tyler, hosts a Competency-Based Learning (CBL) Trainer of Trainers Workshop. The second instalment was in June 2025.

UB Academy – A Model for Curriculum Reform and Competency-Based Education: Originally named UB's Early Childhood Stimulation Center, the UB Academy serves as a hub for research and the demonstration of best practices in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) environments. It offers enriched learning experiences for Pre-Primary and Primary students and functions as a practicum site for student teachers, while lecturers model effective instructional practices.



Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs: In 2016, FEA partnered with MoECST to launch the National Associate Degree and Certificate Programs in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Offered online nationally, these programs extended the reach of the earlier Banana Belt program in the south and the Sugar Belt initiative, which had focused on northern Belize. The associate level program continues while the certificate has been discontinued.

Some Recent Examples of FEA Research, Authors and Affiliations

Vaccine Hesitancy and Views About COVID-19 Among Teachers in Belize. (2023). *Journal of Belizean Research*, 1(2). <https://ubrij.ub.edu.bz/index.php/ubrij/article/view/18> Olga Manzanero, Mathias R. Vairez Jr. – FEA Faculty Dr. Frank C. Gomez Jr. – Educator, Long Beach, California; Janeen Quiroz – FEA Faculty

Adolescents' Academic Behaviors, Grit, and Apprehensions during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications for Educators and Parents. (2022). *Journal of Belizean Research*, 1(1), pp. 54–64 <https://ubrij.ub.edu.bz/index.php/ubrij/article/view/6> Mathias R. Vairez Jr. Janeen Quiroz, Olga Manzanero: FEA ; Wendy Flores, FEA Undergraduate Student; Nora Gough Bradle, Education Consultant, Belize

Effects of Risk Factors on Belizean Adolescents' Academic Behaviors and Grit after Prolonged Absence During the COVID-19 Pandemic. (2022). *Continuity in Education*, 3(1), pp. 58–74. <https://doi.org/10.5334/cie.41> Mathias R. Vairez Jr. – FEA Faculty Dr. Frank C. Gomez Jr. – Educator, Long Beach, California; Dr. Carolyn Gentle-Genitty – Professor & Asst. VP, Indiana University; Olga Manzanero – FEA Faculty; Janeen Quiroz – FEA Faculty

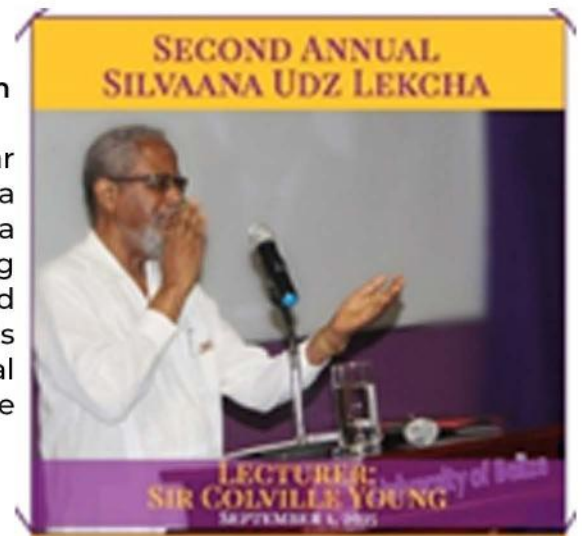
HISTORY, LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENTS: HIGHLIGHTS

Curricular Review of Programs: English B.A. review led to new writing courses, a World Drama course and more emphasis on Technical Writing, Belizean Literature and research. A program review (B.A. in History) led to a Quality Enhancement Plan, with a proposed bachelor's degree in History Education program.

Providing University-Wide Support in Composition Writing: The Kelly-Lewis Writing Center at UB, established in 2014 and renamed as such in 2024, initially supported first-year students in composition writing. It has since expanded to provide writing support across all disciplines throughout the university.

Enhancing Student Engagement Outside the Classroom

The year-round **Jaguar Salon Series** at the Jaguar Auditorium, Belmopan Campus. Two featured events: a ten-year run of the "The Silvaana Udz Lekcha Series"(2014-2023, via Zoom during COVID) featuring dynamic national and international annual speakers and the Evening of the Arts, with eight such successful events since. FEA also established the History Club and several Drama productions (e.g.: Wole Soyinka's The Lion and the Jewel and student-written dramas).



Enhanced Networking with Local and International Entities

Hosted the Jacob Kelberman Quartet for an evening of jazz in the Jaguar Auditorium; collaborations with the Institute of Social and Cultural Research and Belize Archives and Records Services; organised public historical lectures; Comepose Blog partnered with the Universidad Intercultural Maya de Quintana Roo; UB students translated English manuscripts into Yucatec Maya; hosted with East Carolina Univ. the Caribbean Studies Forum, with a study abroad initiative for master's degrees. An MOU was signed (UB and John Paul II Jr. College) easing matriculation into English & English Education bachelor's degrees.

DEANS OF FEA SINCE 2000

2000 - 2005	Dr. Vilma Joseph+	2012 May-2014	Dr. Priscilla Brown Lopez
2005 - 2009	Mr. Nestor Chan+	June 2014 - 2015 Interim	Dr. Joseph Iyo
2009 - 2012 May	Dr. Wilma Wright	2015 - 2020	Dr. Nestor Chan+
		2020 - 2022	Dr. Nadine Tun
2022 - Present : Dr. Thisbe Lucas-Usher			

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES (FHS)

“UB at 25! On behalf of the dedicated faculty and staff of the Faculty of Health Sciences, I am honoured to congratulate UB on its remarkable 25th anniversary. As the national University, UB has faithfully fulfilled its mission by delivering programs that rise to meet the needs of our nation. We take pride in training the next generation of nurses, pharmacists, medical laboratory scientists and social workers, ensuring that as graduates of the University of Belize, they are empowered to make meaningful contributions to the development of Belize, not only in their specialized fields but also as compassionate and responsible individuals committed to providing safe and effective services.”

- Lydia C. Harris-Thurton, RPh, M.Sc., Faculty of Health Sciences



Mrs. Lydia Thurton: UB Senior Lecturer; currently FHS's Interim Dean; BTC Alum (Associate: Chemistry and Biology), UCB Alum (Associate: Applied Science Pharmacology), B.Sc.: Pharmacy and M.Sc. (Pharmacology): Creighton University, Omaha Nebraska USA; Faculty member at UCB 1996-2000 and UB 2000-present. Mrs. Thurton has been Interim in the months since the previous dean, Dr. Lisa Johnson, is now the Dean of UB's School of Medicine, est. Nov. 2024.

FHS Highlights

The Faculty of Health Sciences was formerly the Faculty of Nursing, Allied Health and Social Work. Tremendous growth has occurred over the 25 years of UB. Its programs have seen increased enrolment; Social Work, Pharmacy and Medical Laboratory Sciences programs have upgraded their level

of certification from the associate degree to full bachelor degree programs, aligned with regional and international standards of education and practice.



Meeting International Standards: The Social Work Department has successfully built on bringing awareness to the role of social workers through activities held in commemoration of World Social Work Day to establish the annual International Social Work Research Conference, in collaboration with California Baptist University. This event brings together persons from a wide cross-section of professions to engage in discussion and share research findings on issues that impact our society.

ESTABLISHING TRADITIONS

The transition from the classroom to clinical practice is celebrated by the Nursing programs with the Stripping Ceremony and the Pharmacy and Med Lab programs by the White Coat Ceremony, signifying their commitment to care for others. (R) Medical Laboratory Science White Coat Ceremony (Below L) Nursing Stripping Ceremony (Below R) Pharmacy White Coat Ceremony



Product Development: Pharmacy students developed and marketed over-the-counter pharmaceutical products, working through the stages of identifying market gap, research and formulation development and testing, marketing and production. Some students have continued to produce their products after program completion.



Student Engagement and Outreach Activities: The Allied Health Department's annual events see Pharmacy and Medical Laboratory Science students engaging with the community and providing services to the community. The Natural Products EXPO: Pharmacy students engage with natural medicine practitioners and the community on the role of natural remedies used in healthcare.



• **Social Work Student Exchange Visits:** Rutgers University and Bridgewater University students engaged with UB Social Work Students sharing experiences, visiting internship agency sites, and discussing ethical responsibilities and standards.

DEANS OF FHS SINCE 2000			
2000-2002	Dr. Ismael Hoare	2014-2019 Dec.	Dr. Leolin Castillo
2002-2006	Mrs. Lydia Thurton	2020 Jan. - 2024	Dr. Lisa Johnson
2006-2008	Dr. Sherlene Smith	2024 - Present	Mrs. Lydia Thurton
2010-2013	Dr. Abigail McKay		
Dr. Ismael Hoare served as Dean for a short time between Dr. Smith and Dr. McKay.			

THE UB SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

<https://ubsom.ub.edu.bz/> The UB School of Medicine, newly minted with its first intake of nine (9) in August 2024, will see its first set of medical doctors expected to graduate in 2029

“I have a personal creed that you’re not really an adult until you reach 25. When I think back, I was already a qualified physician at 25; however, the before 25 thoughts and opinions are very juvenile compared to after ... and a university is an institution that must survive and thrive forever and ever. We are in our infancy, so we don’t have the choice of not succeeding. It was a lot of work to get here; there is more work to come. It will not get easier, but it must get better. So, thank you to those who got us from zero to 25; thank you to those who got us to zero day—those five institutions—and we look forward to the next 25, when that Dean of UB’s School of Medicine who will be in this chair will be celebrating how much more UB has done for Belize—how much the University of Belize has achieved with and for Belize. **Congratulations, UB!**”



– **Dr. Lisa Johnson, Dean of UB’s School of Medicine, 2024-Present;** Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences (2020-2024); Alum of legacy institution Belize Technical College (1987)

Education: MBBS, DM(Surg)(UWI), FCCS; General & Trauma Surgeon; Dean & Asst. Professor, UB School of Medicine.

Practice: pre-2003: KMHM; post 2003: Universal Health Services; 2013: KMHM, Emergency Room

Most recent publication: Dr. Lisa Johnson Hartman, J., Johnson, L. J., & Holder, T. (2021). Physiotherapy in Belize I. A Descriptive Analysis of the Belize Physiotherapy Workforce. *BJM*, 10(2), 3-11

Whether it was at KMHM or at a public practice she had done in Jamaica’s north coast, Dr. Johnson says, “Private practice is not my thing.” In addition to being a surgeon (General and Trauma), she is also a self-acclaimed “hospitalist”. Says Dr. J, “I like being in a hospital with multiple levels of care.” Incidentally, Dr. Lisa Johnson is the daughter of the late Mrs. Shirley Johnson, who was Belize’s Principal Nursing Officer in the 1980s.

Question: Dr. Johnson, although all indicators are that UB at 25 is taking its place in the echelons of higher education, is our national university ready to take on training doctors right here fully in Belize?

Dr. Lisa Johnson: The question is why didn’t we start earlier? [Dr. Johnson, herself a proud Belize Technical College alum—1987 in the heyday of BTC’s famous variety shows, relathon, on-campus vibrancy and student life—credits the historical origins of today’s UB with the foundation from which it catapulted. The UB School of Medicine opened with its first intake of nine in August 2024. It is expected that Belize will see its first set of medical doctors graduating in 2029. Dr. Johnson credits the collaborative efforts of multiple units within the University who believed in this project and helped turn the UB School of Medicine into a reality.

Question: Why is this the School of Medicine, as opposed to being, say, a department of medicine under the existing Faculty of Science and Technology. In fact, this is UB's first designated "SCHOOL" in its 25-year history.

Dr. Lisa Johnson: It's different in a number of ways. What exists today—the UB structure is one of a liberal arts university. Professional programs are by nature different than liberal arts programs. And professional programs need to produce graduates that have not only the requisite knowledge, but the requisite skill set on the first day of work, which is usually the day after the completion letter is handed out. And so, the structure of the program, how it's delivered, by whom it is delivered, is different. And that difference is entirely reflected in the medical school and in its program.



ANATOMY LAB

Question: Who are the lecturers in the medical program?

Dr. Lisa Johnson: They are all doctors—physicians—other than our visiting professor from the University of the West Indies. There are two phases of training and so there are two associate deans: one for the preclinical phase and one for the clinical phase. They are both specialists, so they are responsible for the day-to-day operation and management for each phase. For example, our anatomy lecturer is a cardiovascular surgeon, a French Algerian cardiovascular surgeon who trained largely in Algeria but with some additional training in France. Our physiology lecturer is a general practitioner. Our genetics lecturer, who was just added recently, is also a general practitioner. These were people who had an interest in the subject and were willing to do the work to prepare to teach 2025 material to our students.

Question: What is the nature of the collaboration between UB's School of Medicine and UB's Faculty of Health Sciences, of which you are the former Dean?

Dr. Johnson: We will continue to train in nursing, pharmacy and medical laboratory sciences and social work through UB's Faculty of Health Sciences. The School of Medicine is primarily to get out doctors. The School of Medicine is an entity on its own; it had to be that way because with medicine—the things that are required ... the specialized education or taking someone from, 'Hey, I do well in the sciences' to saving someone's life: One must follow rules.



HISTOLOGY LAB

Question: What is required for acceptance to the School of Medicine?

Dr. Johnson: You have to have done three science majors: biology, chemistry and math with a physics minor culminating with an associate degree in pre-medical sciences. So, if you come straight out of high school, you can do that first. You must also have had a B average throughout your time in sixth form or associate's program, then you are eligible for entry. We also do have an entrance exam where you can challenge, and if you get a B or higher, you will meet the academic requirements.

Question: Are there online options with technology in teaching at the School of Medicine?

Dr. Lisa Johnson: There will be occasional online sessions. For example, our anatomy lecturer got one of her mentors, a cardiologist in Paris, to sit in on one of our lectures on the anatomy of the heart. Now this is someone who is incredibly qualified, and well published and it's part of his goals to interact with medical students in different countries, especially for people whom he taught—our lecturer was one of his students. So, our UB medical students had a transnational experience with this incredibly well-educated and well-known physician. And what we have now is that there is a lot more technology that's added is hook up machines to and that there is a lot more technology in medical education, for example, simulators and in medical practice but at the end of the day, the patient is the best teacher. We use software in our anatomy and physiology labs; for example with software and a relatively inexpensive piece of equipment we can do some basic respiratory testing like spirometry. The technology is additive, but education in medicine is largely face-to-face. It's when you have gotten the basics and you know the things that you are then able to go online.



On Standards and Accreditation for the Medical School

Dr. Johnson is very clear about standards: "The starting point has to be above the level of the standard and stay there no matter what else you do. Accreditation is the stamp of approval on meeting the standards. For the CARICOM countries and for the wider Caribbean, that accreditation agency is the Caribbean Accreditation Agency for Medical Schools and Other Health Professionals, a product of CARICOM, but it does not report to CARICOM. The Agency itself is accredited to

World Federation of Medical Education. So, through the World Federation of Medical Education, the curricula are standardized; thus, from one country to the next, we are practicing medicine and delivering care, all at a certain standard, or at least we should be. In order to maintain accreditation, you have to get a certain level, you have to be doing certain things, documented and inspected via visits, and you have to subscribe to the philosophies of evidence-based medicine. When you have reached that goal, the goal then is to maintain it—so accreditation is what says you're on the right path." The UB School of Medicine will apply for provisional accreditation by the end of 2025. Dr. Johnson noted that, "Once we remain on the right path, full accreditation will follow once we graduate our first class."

ON UB's University ACCREDITATION Status:
Submission to seek accreditation to SACS is expected by late 2025

The elephant in university rooms around the world: ACCREDITATION. Some have questioned if the time-consuming resource-draining process of accreditation seeking is worth it, particularly as university credits get accepted anyway. UB graduates have gone on to Harvard, UWI, European universities and other worldwide institutions. Closer to daily life impacts, mechanics are being certified through UB; lines technicians, nurses, teachers and lab technicians are graduating and serving everyday Belizean needs. For all presidents, accreditation has always been the Holy Grail—and they agree that benefits accrue even during the process.

University of Belize



"Accreditation is something which can only benefit UB. The internal evaluation required in the accreditation process would FORCE you to look at things like your library's updates and accessibility—would force you to look at your faculty—at your program development, and so on. So, even if that's all you did in the process—the internal strengthening and updating—even if that is all you get to do in the push for accreditation, it is well worth it."

– Dr. Santos Mahung, UB President 2008 - 2010

“And another thing that will make a university respected would be the quality of its graduates, and that begins with the quality of its programs, the quality of its lecturers, its instructors—all of that. Therefore, the idea of quality assurance, the idea of national and regional accreditation of our programs, was central to my thinking ... and we launched our accreditation drive in a big way with SACS, putting in place to do internal quality self-review, a critical first step in the accreditation process. Then came COVID.”

- Professor Clement Sankat, UB President 2017–2021

“A medical school requires a lot to get it started. ... [but] the potential for groundbreaking work, for changing the dynamics within a community and within a country, for discovery, is limitless—having a good medical school really does open up multiple doors for a country. ... of being able to participate in the world of developing the medical care of the present, of the near future and of the distant future.”

- Dr. Lisa Johnson, Dean of UB's School of Medicine

“Our mantra—Excellence. Everything we do, we must do it to the best of our ability, and that is what will get us the reputation, even outside of accreditation. But note: Accreditation is indeed a big issue for us, and it is one that we have accepted and that is UB Board of Trustees-mandated. We've decided to sign on to seek accreditation to one of the five renowned US-based accreditation systems—SACS. We are doing all the steps needed to submit for accreditation—and that submission will go in THIS year, 2025.

.Dr. Vincent Palacio, Interim UB President 2021-2023; UB President, 2023-current

See “Accelerating the Accreditation Drive Push: SACS” under the section “The Accelerating Years.”

QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA)

The Quality Assurance Office is responsible for developing, monitoring, reviewing and implementing UB's quality assurance policies and procedures. Compliance monitoring and reporting are critical to receiving accreditation status. Its genesis was under the stewardship of Dr. Angel Cal. By 2008 under his watch, 19 of 53 programs had gone through the review process.

Supervision comes under the Office of the VP (Academic Affairs). Under it's purview are internal quality assurance processes, strategic planning and a focus on academic standards and ethical research practices, with specific departments and initiatives dedicated to these areas. UB's commitment to quality is reflected in its strategic planning, such as the "UB Rise 2027" Strategic Plan 2023-2027, which guides its initiatives. Effective leadership and governance are considered crucial for achieving quality standards.

The post of Director of Quality Assurance [The Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AQA) Officer as it was called at one point in the push for accreditation] assists in providing guidance to the university in the implementation of the accreditation activities. UB is advertising this post at the time of publication of this magazine. Mrs. Tricia Stuart-Gordon is serving as the Quality Assurance Officer until the post is filled. As the vacancy notes: The Director assures the operation and management of the Quality Assurance Office to make significant contributions to the development, monitoring, review, management and implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures and associated administrative systems and contributes to special institutional projects and QA related activities.

TOLEDO CAMPUS



In its 25 years, UB's southern campus has had only two administrators. The current head is Mr. Roy Polonio. M.Sc. in Microbiology (Medical), 2000, from University of Rhode Island; M.Sc. in Fisheries and Animal Veterinary Science, 1995, from University RI; B.Sc. Honors in Biology and Chemistry, 1988, from SJCJC, Belize. Mr. Polonio also has contributed to several academic journal publications. The most recent is 2021: Polonio, R., J. López-Domínguez, C.Herrera, E. Dumonteil. "Molecular ecology of *Triatoma dimidiata* in southern Belize reveals risk for human infection and the local differentiation of *Trypanosoma cruzi* parasites". *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*.

(L) Mr. Stanley Nicholas (M.Ed. 1990, Ed.S. 2006; Alum of BELCAST and UCB) was the UB-Toledo Campus Administrator 2000 to–July 2013; Mrs. Celia Mahung was Interim in 2006 (R) Campus Director Roy Polonio (August 2013–Present)



Toledo Community College (TCC) supports UB's efforts in ensuring students receive quality laboratory-based training for the science program the Toledo campus now offers, starting in August 2025.

Congratulations to the University of Belize on its 25th anniversary from the UB-Toledo Campus!



(Above) UB-Toledo and Toledo Community College collaboration: Science Program



2024 (Above L-R): UB-Toledo Director Mr. Roy Polonio, UB Graduation Guest Speaker, House Speaker Hon. Valerie Woods, Mr. Wil Maheia, environmental activist and politician; Mr. Eccleston Irving, UB Board of Trustees



(Above R): 2017 UB-Toledo students enrolled in Certificate in Applied Agriculture with Central Farm lecturer on-site visit to Pine Hill



(L) 2025 UB-Toledo Launches Forums on Toledo District History

(R) 2017 UB-Toledo annual Marketing & Small Business Expo at Punta Gorda Central Park

Examples of UB-Toledo Outreach-Service in 2014-15

- Ms. Olga Manzanero FEA Lecturer and her students fundraised and made financial contributions to assist **Silver Creek School** (stationery supplies, fans, bookshelves); **Indian Creek RC** (stationery supplies); **PG Hospital** (shelf, toys and books).
- Ms. Gillian Flowers assisted St. Benedict RC school teachers in improving students' reading skills.
- Mr. Polonio participated in public health research in collaboration with experts from University of South Florida College of Public Health; received Exceptional Community Partner Award.

(Below) 2025 UB-Toledo Orientation (Below L) UB-Toledo Gardening Club maintain cassava plants (Below R) Mr. Polonio addressing students at 2025 UB-Toledo Orientation



CENTRAL FARM CAMPUS



“Congratulations to the University of Belize on its 25th anniversary. As someone who began my journey at the Belize College of Agriculture, I am especially proud to see how that institution has evolved into what is now the Department of Agriculture at UB. The transformation has been incredible—what was once a small technical school is now a national leader in agricultural education, research and outreach. This milestone is not just a reminder of how far we’ve come, but also of the responsibility we carry to keep building a stronger, more resilient future. I’m honored to be part of that journey.”

– Mr. Maximiliano Ortega, Director

Mr. Maximiliano Ortega is an alum of legacy institution Belize College of Agriculture. He has a master’s degree in Agriculture Diversification from UNPHU in the Dominican Republic. He also brings over two decades of experience in higher education, applied research and rural transformation across Belize and the Caribbean.

As Director of UB’s Central Farm Campus, his leadership has been instrumental in modernizing academic programs, aligning them with national priorities and securing externally funded projects that directly support teaching, learning, and research capacity on campus. These initiatives have strengthened the University's practical and technical foundation, particularly in climate resilience, livestock production and sustainable agriculture. Mr. Ortega also plays an active role in national agricultural policy and development, serving on several key boards and technical committees.

The Central Farm campus, through its activities, is another example of UB fulfilling its mission to drive national progress through education, research and service. As UB marks 25 years of impact, Central Farm’s campus contributions reflect the transformative potential of leadership grounded in both technical expertise and national commitment.

The UB Central Farm campus also produces and sells products such as honey, meats, vegetables, peppers, eggs and other agricultural outputs.



CENTRAL FARM CAMPUS ADMINISTRATORS: 2000-2025			
2000 - 2008	Mr. David Jones	2019 – 2021	Mrs. Zoe Zetina
2008 - 2009	Mr. Romaldo Lewis	2021 – PRESENT	Mr. Maximilliano Ortega
2009 - 2015	Dr. Gordon Holder		
2018 – 2019	Dr. Roxanna Alvarez		

CALABASH CAYE

"My inspiration came in 1996, from the very first time my then NRM teacher, Dr. Vincent Palacio, took us on a field trip to Calabash Caye where the University of Belize has a research station. For the first time, I learned how to swim. Our classmates that knew how to swim guided us who were just learning. For the first time I saw the Barrier Reef, and I was inspired! And from that day I knew this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

- Dr. Arleni Rogers, Asst. Professor NRMP and UB NRM alum 2000



HUNTING CAYE

Living Reef Center Hunting Caye
– Work in Progress



Hunting Caye Clean-up – Help from
Fisheries, Coast Guard, SEA



Hunting caye – work in progress

New aluminum trailer

At waterside preparing for
a trip



The UB Calabash Caye Field Station is at Turneffe Atoll. The Living Reef Center on Hunting Caye, Toledo, is managed by UB. Hunting Caye is one of the Sapodilla Cayes lying within the Sapodilla Caye Marine Reserve.

UB'S ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ERI)



UB's ERI was inaugurated in January 2010, created primarily to address the large gap in local capacity for research and monitoring in Belize. It was the brainchild of Dr. Elma Kay and Dr. Leandra Cho-Ricketts. After her doctoral degree, Dr. Kay returned to Belize and focused on terrestrial biodiversity at UB; her UB marine counterpart was Dr. Leandra Cho-Ricketts. As Dr. Kay noted in an interview upon ERI's 10th anniversary in 2020 when she was the Science Director for the Sustainable Landscapes Program at UB's ERI: "She and I saw the need to create something different. We wanted a place—a space—that could add quality to the teaching and learning of the academic programs of the university and to train and mentor the new generation of conservation and natural resources management professionals. We wanted to do this while contributing tools and scientific evidence to guide management and policy intervention so that Belizeans can enjoy the country's amazing biodiversity and natural wealth for generations to come."

Source: <https://wildearthallies.org/voices-elma-kay/Wild Earth Allies>



Thus, the ERI was established. By 2020, Dr. Elma Kay noted that ERI had trained over 800 university graduates. Moreover, mentorship and professional capacity building programs enabled outreach to almost 500 Belizeans and national and international stakeholders in conservation and natural resources management. These are the people making a difference on-the-ground when it comes to the management of our national protected areas system and other natural resources." Dr. Kay also noted in the 10th anniversary interview that "ERI's annual terrestrial biodiversity monitoring is guiding adaptive management by our on-the-ground partners in key parts of the country and our staff serve on 25 national technical and scientific committees guiding protected areas and natural resources management policy."

Both trailblazers have since moved from UB to offer even more sterling service to Belize. In 2022, Dr. Cho-Ricketts became the Executive Director of the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future. Dr. Elma Kay is currently the Managing Director of the Belize Maya Forest Corridor Trust, with 236,000 acres of forest under her stewardship. It is Dr. Kay and friends who co-founded the Belize Maya Forest Corridor Trust this.

Picture Upper (R) Dr. Elma Kay Lower (R) Dr. Leandra Cho-Ricketts



(L) Dr. Jake Snaadon is the current ERI Director; Ph.D. Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge; Post-doctoral Researcher, University of Zurich; B.Sc. Hons Tropical Environmental Science, University of Aberdeen

REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTER (RLC)

“Congratulations, UB, on reaching this remarkable 25-year milestone! As the national university, UB continues to stand as a beacon of access, transformation and leadership in higher education. This celebration marks not just the university’s institutional journey but also the achievements of its students, faculty, staff and alumni who continue to shape Belize’s future. On behalf of the Regional Language Center, I extend warmest wishes and continued success as UB strengthens its vision for inclusive development, regional collaboration and academic excellence.”



-Mr. Lugie Cruz, RLC Director: M.A. in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language; pursuing a second master’s degree in Intercultural Studies and Teaching Methods for Second Languages, as part of a Ph.D. track; over 10 yrs. experience in teaching English and Spanish as second languages; spearheading RLC’s programs using task-based and competency-based methodologies.



[L: UB and Taiwanese students, circa 2010 (R) The RLC Building, Taiwan-funded, inaugurated 2000]

RLC Highlights

- Serves as UB’s hub for second language learning, intercultural dialogue; instruction in English, Spanish and other regional languages
- Home of the Certificate in English as a Second Language (CESL), a full-time, immersive program for local and international students
- Offers customized language programs in-person & online
- Emphasizes task and competency-based instruction
- Fosters regional integration C. America/Caribbean
- Supports UB’s vision of becoming a regional leader in language education and across borders



INTERCULTURAL INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE INSTITUTE (IILI)



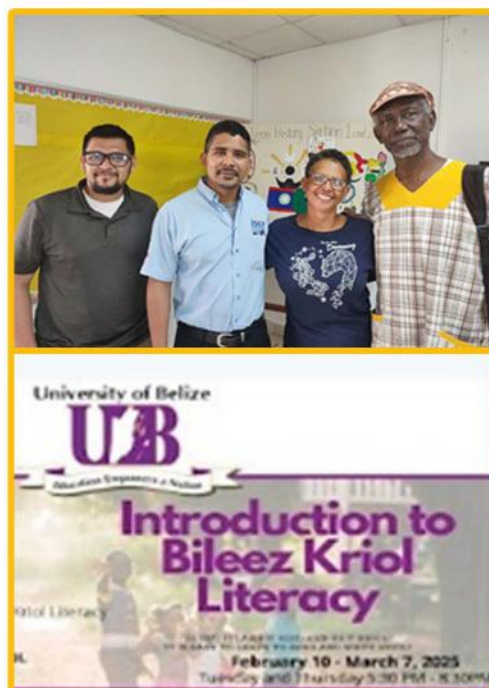
“Congratulations to the University of Belize on its 25th Anniversary. It has been 25 years of being the heartbeat of our country’s national development. The university continues to play a key role in shaping generations of leaders, professionals, critical thinkers and innovators who meaningfully contribute to our collective advances. The university is a progressive space with a commitment to accessible, quality education. Its expanding academic and non-academic programs reflect the institution’s central role in driving social progress, economic growth and cultural preservation. We celebrate this legacy and look forward to UB’s continued impact in transforming lives and advancing Belize’s future. Happy 25th Anniversary, UB!”

-Delmer Tzib, Director UB-IILI

(Above): Delmer Tzib, M.A.-History: Director, UB’s Intercultural Indigenous Language Institute, established 2023; UB Alum 2009 -2013 (B.A. in History); M.A. 2020, University of the South Pacific, Fiji. Mr. Tzib is an educator and cultural advocate from San Antonio, Cayo, deeply committed to preserving Belizean heritage empowering youth through education. (R) 2023 consultation workshop: Picture shows three of the participants with the UB Director: (L-R) Delmer Tzib, UB; Rolando Cocom: ISCR-NICH; Silvaana Udz, Kriol language sociolinguist and National Kriol Council; Roy Cayetano, linguist, Garifuna language and National Garifuna Council. Others also participated, including 2 of Belize’s 3 Maya cultures.

“I hold dear to my heart the Intercultural] Indigenous Language Institute - one in which several local experts serve as advisors.”

- UB President Vincent Palacio



Some Highlights and Initiatives:

- Current focus: Preservation/revitalization: Yucatec Q’eqchi’, Mopan Maya and Garifuna
- Intergenerational transmission of languages through workshop and elders’ outreach
- Educational materials and translation resources
- Language Courses and Training: Piloted and supported beginner-level courses in Garifuna, Yucatec Maya, Q’eqchi’ Maya, Mopan Maya, Kriol (orthography and translation)
- Language and heritage exhibitions: oral traditions, ancestral writing systems, and traditional crafts: Indigenous Resistance Day, Garifuna Survival Day, Emancipation Day and such

Examples of guest lectures by indigenous scholars and cultural practitioners include: The Belizean Wheel of Memory, Dr. Stanley Griffin, UWI; Mopan Maya embroidery and samples, Ms. Sarah Chun; Wanaragua, Mr. Joshua Arana; The Deer Dance, Mr. Aurelio Sho. Recent research project: Assessing the language vitality of the Yucatec Maya in western Belize.

76 THE INSTITUTE OF BANKING & FINANCE



“Since joining the UB Black Jaguar family in 2019, I’ve come to appreciate that UB is more than just an institution—it is home. The resilient and vibrant colors of Purple and Gold don’t just decorate the campus; they represent the spirit of a national university bold enough to embrace change and strong enough to lead it. Over the years, I’ve witnessed UB rise to meet the growing demands of a 21st-century education, and the establishment of the Institute of Banking and Finance in 2023 stands as a proud example of that forward-thinking vision. As we celebrate 25 years of progress,

innovation and impact, let us raise our voices—loud and proud. UB is not just building minds; it’s building a nation. Happy 25th Anniversary, UB!”

Derick Conoqui, Director of the UB Institute of Banking & Finance: Master’s degree in Finance and Financial Law, University of London; Bachelor’s in Economics and Law, UWI-Cave Hill. With over a decade of leadership experience across domestic and international banking, real estate, card services, financial risk, governance and compliance, he brings a wealth of cross-sector expertise to his roles. As the IBF Director at UB since the Institute’s induction in 2023, Mr. Conoqui has been leading initiatives to advance professional training and industry development in Belize’s banking and financial sector.

INSTITUTE OF BANKING AND FINANCE: KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 120+ graduates have successfully completed one or more certification programs since inception of the Institute in 2023.
- Offers professional certification programs in FinTech, Cybersecurity, Fraud Risk Management, Securities Industry Essentials (SIE), Anti-Money Laundering (AML/CFT/CPF), and such
- Memorandum of Understanding with Financial Services Commission of Belize, Nov. 2023
- Advisory Board representatives: Financial Services Commission, Belize Bankers Assc., RF&G Insurance, Financial Intelligence Unit, Central Bank of Belize, and UB
- Operates a 100% remote classroom model; cross-sectoral, local and regional participants; professionals in Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, and Trinidad
- Bridges the gap between academia and industry by providing practical, career-focused training
- Co-hosts AML/CFT/CPF conferences: impacts policy, capacity building (public/private sectors)
- Collaborates with regulators, financial institutions and global partners to design and deliver impactful, relevant training solutions
- Develops industry-specific short courses tailored to the needs of professionals at all levels—from entry-level staff to senior leadership
- Added new research focus in key areas such as AML-CFT-CPF Training and Virtual Assets



Mr. Claude Haylock,
Director General Financial
Services Commission

BELIZE POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (BELPRI)

"I have meetings with government from time to time to share with them the expertise base that exists here at the University, and when they expressed the need for policy strengthening and policy development, we came to the rescue."

- Dr. Vincent Palacio, UB President



Bridging Knowledge to Power

The Belize Policy Research Institute at the University of Belize (BEPRI-UB) is Belize's newest institute for public policy research with the vision to become a widely respected and essential policy actor whose evidence-based work influences public policies and behaviors toward a more prosperous, just, equitable and peaceful Belizean society. The establishment of BEPRI-UB is rooted in UB's research with the vision to become a widely respected and essential policy actor whose evidence-based work influences public policies and behaviors toward a more prosperous, just, equitable and peaceful Belizean society. The establishment of BEPRI-UB is rooted in UB's own determination to advance its institutional mission "to become a center of excellence in research that contributes to Belize's development."



BELPRI is now in its acceleration stage, having successfully hosted two research seminars. The first, on May 29, 2025, featured Ms. Elena Stacy, Ph.D. Candidate of the University of California, Berkeley, presenting "Agricultural Settlement and Structural Change: The Case of Mennonites in Belize." The second, on June 24, 2025, was the launch of "The Belizean Economy in the 21st Century: When and Why Belize Fell Behind and What to Do About It." The author was Professor Victor Bulmer-Thomas (in picture left center, courtesy Belize Breaking News.)

Panel L-R: Mr. Emory Ford, Chief Economist, Central Bank of Belize; Mr. Carlos Pol, CEO, Ministry of Economic Transformation; Dr. Philip Castillo, Asst. Prof., UB- FMSS.



INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT OFFICE (IAO)

“On behalf of the Institutional Advancement Office, we extend our warmest congratulations to UB on reaching this important milestone—25 years of excellence in higher education, service and national development. This anniversary is a time to celebrate UB’s enduring impact on Belizean society. For a quarter of a century, the University has stood as a beacon of knowledge, inclusion and innovation, empowering generations of leaders, thinkers and change-agents. With Jaguar pride, we applaud the commitment of faculty, staff, students, alumni and partners whose collective efforts have shaped UB’s growth and achievements. As we reflect on this legacy, the Institutional Advancement Office reaffirms its dedication to supporting UB’s strategic direction through resource development, stakeholder engagements, and partnership building. Congratulations to the University of Belize at 25!

- Mr. Egbert Irving, Director, IAO; over 2 decades of experience in training, organizational strategy and executive leadership across the Caribbean



About IAO

IAO is UB’s central hub for external engagement and development. Its vision is to be the focal point of growth at UB, working in close collaboration with the Office of the President, academic units, students, alumni and community stakeholders to promote and advance the University’s strategic priorities. Its mission is to support UB through relationship-building with academic institutions, public agencies, corporate partners and community actors. As the University of Belize celebrates 25 years of service and impact, the IAO remains proud to support its mission and looks forward to continue contributing in its role as a driver of national progress.

(L) - Mr. Ewart Robateau, former Development Officer

Key Areas of Focus

- Fundraising & Donor Relations: Engaging, acknowledging, developing agreements and campaigns
- Scholarship Management: Coordinating externally funded scholarships for UB students
- Partnership Development: Fostering strategic local, regional and international collaborations
- Alumni Engagement: Strengthening lifelong connections with UB graduates
- Public Relations: Representing UB in strategic & institutional advancement matters
- Business Development: : Supporting innovation and revenue-generating initiatives

THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE: KEY STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL PARTNER

“And the whole issue of national development: I cannot stress that enough because we do not serve a purpose if we are not meeting national development. That is why I walk the halls of Cabinet, of our government ministers, to show them how we could assist them here at the University. I have meetings with them from time to time to share with them the expertise base that exists here at UB.”

– Dr. Vincent Palacio, UB President

(R) President Vincent Palacio with Hon. Francis Fonseca, 2023 at the launch of UB's Institute of Banking and Finance



(Far Left: L-R) Late Board Chair G. Harrison Pilgrim+ and then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon, Sedi Elrington at UB Jaguar Auditorium for Belize-Guatemala forum. (Below far left): Prime Minister Hon. John Briceno at the statue unveiling for the late Gian Chand Gandhi+ on UB's Belmopan campus. Gian Gandhi was known as an indefatigable worker. He came to Belize in 1978 as a Crown Counsel.



In 1982, he took up the position of Belize's Director of Public Prosecutions, moving on four years later to being the Solicitor General for the next 13 years. UB's Belize City FMSS main building was renamed the Gian Gandhi Building.



(Top L) Hon. Oscar Requeña, Minister of Education, Science and Technology 2025



(Bottom L) Ms. Yolanda Gongora, Chief Education Officer

(L-R) 2019: The late UB Board Chairman G. Harrison Pilgrim+, Prime Minister of Belize Hon. John Briceno, President Professor Clement Sankat at Independence Celebrations hosted by the Governor General of Belize



Message from Ms. Yolanda Gongora, Chief Education Officer

M.Sc. Educational Leadership (University of North Florida); over 35 years as a stalwart career educator; began teaching career at Orange Walk Technical; served as a principal and previously in MOE as the Director General of School Services.

“Over the past quarter-century, UB has played a crucial role in advancing higher education and fostering national development in Belize. UB has consistently raised the standards of education. Its ongoing evolution—reflected in the expansion of academic offerings to meet national priorities in fields such as agriculture, education, and medicine—now includes bachelor's and master's degrees, with plans for doctoral programs on the horizon. This growth underscores the University's adaptability and steadfast commitment to preparing Belizean leaders.

UB's impact is demonstrated in the many alumni now serving in leadership roles, including our current Minister of Education, who also contributed to the institution as a faculty member. At the heart of this success is the enduring partnership between UB and the Ministry of Education. Our shared commitment to accessible, high-quality education that meets the evolving needs of Belize remains central to national progress. As Chief Education Officer, I reaffirm the Ministry's unwavering support for this collaboration. Together, we will ensure that the University of Belize remains a beacon of innovation, excellence, and national leadership. May the strong relationship between the University and the Ministry of Education continue to serve as a model of collaboration and public service, inspiring continued progress for generations to come. Congratulations to the University of Belize on 25 years of exceptional contribution to our nation. May your legacy grow ever stronger through shared purpose and lasting partnership.”

JUNE 25, 2025: GROUNDBREAKING AT UB BELMOPAN FOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: CLIMATE CHANGE 5CS



Through this mutually beneficial climate action partnership with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5Cs), UB, apart from being noted as the center for climate change programs, will also receive scholarships and offer training for faculty and staff. Regionally, the Climate Change Center at UB will be the Caribbean's hub for fostering collaboration and research on the worldwide concern of climate change. The 5Cs Center on five acres of UB land is expected to be established in full by the end of 2026. **(Right)** Pharmacy Interns Participating in Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Activity with MOHW.



(Left) 2012: Ambassador Wu, Taiwan, donated \$5,000 to Belize's Cancer Society at a UB-FEA Belize City event for cancer awareness

THE MEDIA

The University of Belize considers the media as one of the biggest partners in Belize's national development, especially its keeping its pulse on news, events, issues and concerns that drive national development. UB now hosts an Investigative Journalism Award. **(Below L)** Dr. Vincent Palacio (President of the University of Belize) and Holly Edgell (co-founder of the Prize) signed an MOU to join the two entities in partnership on May 4, 2024.

(Below R) A team from 7News won the top prize in 2024 for their investigation, "Guns & Graft: Exposing the Licensing Racket." In 2023, 7News also won for their investigation "Disaster at David L. McKoy."



A team from News5 won a finalist award in 2024 for their investigation "Narco Links Suspected as Cattle Ranching Threatens Belize Rainforests."



Thurs day, July 17th, 2008 **AMANDALA**
BELIZE'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Last week Friday, I attended a dynamic celebration of a 31-strong cohort of Belizean students who had successfully completed year-one of their doctorates in education in choices from the following four cognates: Organizational Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Higher Education, and Instructional Technology. I can remember the very early days Nobody wanted to return home — most of the seven were either from out of state or from overseas. When we graduated, only three of the seven had made it to the finish mark at that point. Two had withdrawn within the first year, another had transferred to another university, and one had outstanding credits to complete. It was great pressure all the way down to the finish line.

So as I listened to the speeches given by the Provost and the Assistant Provost of Nova Southeastern University (that is offering the degree), and to those of **Dr. Vilma Joseph* of the University of Belize, who was instrumental in working with Nova in making the Ed.D. program a reality**, I understood why students were celebrating their first year completion of the program. In addition to the 31 doctoral students from the UB-Nova cohort, there are some 24 doctoral students at Galen University who are pursuing Ed.D's as well, and they are expected to complete their degrees within the next three years. **The opportunity to now complete a doctoral program at home should soon change the face of the nation into a cadre of healers in education—our country right now needs all the help it can get to educate our young citizens and returning adult population who previously, in some instances, did not have the opportunity to pursue even a primary education.**

Source: <https://amandala.com.bz/news/in-three-to-four-years-55-belizean-education-doctors-on-the-horizon/>


Love 13 August 22, 2024
 UB Chairman Responds to NTUCB Concerns Over University Hospital Relocation Decision

PlusTV July 8, 2025:
 UBFSU Says they want the 9% salary increase they were promised!

UB-Toledo Recruitment Drive: used PGTV Cable TV and Wamalali Radio

ctv June 25, 2025
 UB, the five Cs, and the government of Belize. The new facility will include research labs, training rooms, and collaborative spaces.

xtv Here's this snippet from our Communications Coordinator on XTV Belize's Krem WUB Morning Vibes (aired June 11, 2025), as she shares what's in store for....

 **The San Pedro Sun** The University of Belize Enhances Its Registration Process and Addresses Recent Challenges - August 18th, 2024

THANKS TO ALL PARTNERS OVER THE YEARS!



These logos represent only a sample of some of the many partners the University has had over the years.

Past 3 Years List of MOUs: The start of so many partnerships over UB's 25 years

2023	2024	2025: Jan - July
Bialystok University of Technology, Republic of Poland	Skills to Access the Green Economy SAGE, UB, Min. of Agriculture, CAPRI, Caribbean Policy Research Institute, BELPRI-UB	Belize Archives and Records Service BARS and UB
Universidade de Federal Do Delta Do Parnaiba, Brazil		NYU Abu Dhabi and UB
John Paul the Great Jr College, Benque Viejo	Min.of Finance, Economic Dev. and Investment, UB	Belize Tourism Board /UB
William Dawson Scholarship MoU, MHA, MYTS, MOE	Full Circle Belize Project and UB	The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Czech Republic	Social Investment Fund and UB	Ghan Eden Agricultural and Ecology Enterprise/ UB
Financial Services Commission, Belmopan Belize	FORTIS Bz Ltd/UB	Veritas University Abuja - Nigeria and UB
National Bank of Belize, Belmopan Belize	Independence Junior College and UB	Suncrest University and UB
Direccion General de la Educacion Superior, Estado de Quintana Roo	Stann Creek Ecumenical Jr. College/UB	The Nature Conservancy and UB
Boston University, Boston MA, USA	Muffles Jr College / UB	
Rutger University, New Jersey, USA	Corozal Jr.College/UB	
Department of the Environment, BZ	TIDE and UB	
Ministry of the Blue Economy, BZ	Bridgewater State University and UB	
International Regional Organization for plant and animal health OIRSA	Sacred Heart Junior College and UB	
Taiwan ICDF, Ministry of Agriculture, BAHA, and Belize Banana		
Growers Association BGA,BZ		
Belize National Forensic Science Service / Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries on Institutional Cooperation		

OFFICE OF DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)

“We are being accessible. We have put a lot of resources into our ODL Unit-that is our Open and Distance Learning Unit. And they, as a result, have won a couple projects. One is a \$2.1million project to train public officers in financial management issues, in budgeting, etc., and that is a three-year project, and we are in the middle of it, making sure that the public officers are trained up, and this is often done online. We have a very strong online presence, using the Moodle platform.”

-Dr. Vincent Palacio, UB President



(L) Dr. Freida Palma heads the ODL. Together with others in the Office, like **(R)** Dr. Beverly Faber, Dr. Palma and her team ensure that UB's online offerings to students run smoothly. ODL also runs pre-university courses in core subject areas for incoming students who need them. Equally, ODL offers ongoing Continuing Professional Development training for faculty and staff. It also allows UB to engage in much more competitive bidding in offering education and training services to government departments and the general public. Said President Palacio in his interview for this jubilee magazine: “We recently developed/won another contract to train the Audit Dept. on

auditing procedures so their workers could be certified. Again, our ODL did it; they are very proactive, and they go out to see how they could help, could enhance, the training within the public and private sector.”



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)



The Information and Communication Technology Department (ICT) provides technical support, manages the university's IT infrastructure and ensures efficient operation of ICT services for the university community. Specific services include support for email, the Moodle learning platform, the UB website, ArcGIS and other on-campus systems.

The ICT Director in 2025 is Mr. Louis Herrera. He and his team develop ICT strategies and policies aligned with the university's mission. The ICT Department provides effective technical support for the University's operations. ICT also manages computer labs on every UB campus, with a Lab Monitor providing technical support as needed, with students accessing UB's Wi-Fi network with their domain username and password. There is also a Help Desk. The Department operates a ticketing system for more efficient management of support requests.

SECURITY ACROSS CAMPUSES AND PHYSICAL PLANT: WORKING IN TANDEM



Picture Above (L-R) 2025: Public Safety Officer Mr. Victor Saki with Head of Security, Mr. John Salam; (Below) 2001 Mr. Salam just transferred from Bz City to Bmp campus

"I want to congratulate the University of Belize on its dedication to academic excellence and national development as we continue to inspire. Let's shine, and build, and empower and hold an impact for the future. And to the wider agencies that I work with-the Police, Fire and so on, thank you all. We have been working this close relationship for the past 25 years, and let's maintain and continue to do the best in safety for our students, faculty, staff and the public."

- Mr. John Salam, UB's Head of Security

Campus Safety Day Outreach: On Campus Safety Day, the Public Safety Dept. brings in all the safety agencies to campus to have presentations with the students, and it also brings in students from the high schools and primary schools to the campus so that they could be part of the safety message.

From foot patrols to cycle patrols to drone surveillance: "Now we focus on the usage of our security surveillance. We have also looked at the campus culture, in terms of access control. And we also monitor the lighting on all the four campuses. We have areas of comprehensive preventative patrol, which has helped us tremendously and we review community crime data. These days, if you do hear that a UB student might have been a victim of robbery, it occurs outside the perimeter of the campus, which means the student already exited the campus."

Good working relationship with the Police and Fire Departments: "I usually meet with the CEO to give him updates on activities and any crime data. We also request assistance to conduct security critical spot checks on campus during the day or night, updates on activities and any crime data. We have that in Belize City and in Belmopan. We also work with the Fire Department, the Canine Department and the other stakeholders," said Mr. Salam.

Physical Plant: Physical Plant is much more than about lighting, of course! Think maintenance, renovations ... broken pipe anyone? A veteran of the UB Physical Plant Office, (Above R) Mr. Francis Burns heads this Office and works closely with Mr. Salam. However, as one now retired UB lecturer recalls about a grandmother's complaint when her granddaughter was attending UB Belize City 2010: "Di lighting, di lighting .. they haftu to fix up, put more lights by di steps!" Physical Plant stepped up.

Lighting on campus: "We have worked closely with the Physical Plant Department to have better lighting, especially on the walkways and the surrounding perimeter of the campus," said Mr. Salam. "Also, since the year 2010, through 2015, 2018, with the increase in night classes, the concern was with rushing from work, students often forget to be safety conscious. So, we try to educate, working through Deans offices. With online classes having more options now, it is easier, and we can manage with the preventative patrol on campus and the foot patrol," noted Mr. Salam.



Above: entrance to UB's main campus in Belmopan

Note: Mr. Michael Sanchez and Mr. Paul Satchwell preceded Mr. Burns as Physical Plant Director.

GOVERNANCE

The UB community thanks all chairpersons of its Board of Trustees over the years and Board members whose oversight and guidance have served as the rudder on the ship that UB's first president, Dr. Angel Cal, set sail in 2000.

Chairpersons of the UB Board of Trustees: 2000 – 2025



"As a chief executive, I try to get the best people, and then I try to provide the best working conditions for them. Then I let them flex. The University of Belize is in better shape, leadership and morale wise, than we were at birth in August of 2000." (L) Evan X Hyde, UB's first Chairman, Board of Trustees 2000-2004, in "From the Publisher," *AmandalaBelize*, Wednesday, April 6, 2005.

<https://amandala.com.bz/news/2005/page/39/>



(L-R) Dr. Louis Zabaneh, Mrs. Imani Fairweather-Morrisson, The late G.A. Harrison Pilgrim+, Hon. Anthony Sylvestre Jr.

YEAR	CHAIRPERSON
August 2000 - November 2004	Mr. Evan X Hyde
February 2005 - March 2008	Dr. Louis Zabaneh
June 2008-August 2013	Mrs. Imani Fairweather-Morrisson
October 2013-November 2020	Mr. G. A. Harrison Pilgrim
January 2021- July 2023	Hon. Anthony Sylvestre Jr.
December 2023- Present	Mr. Godfrey P. Smith



Message from the Chairman of the UB Board of Trustees, Mr. Godfrey Smith

"The success of our national university UB—the University of Belize—is reflected not only in its many alumni who are in leadership positions across Belize, but also in its participation in local, regional and international organizations. Above all, UB's distinctiveness is seen in its mission and its fulfilling of its mission in research and service towards national development. With its 25 years of experience firmly underpinning 18,000-plus graduates over the past generation, UB proudly, eagerly and sustainably is taking its place in the pantheon of impactful universities. On behalf of the UB Board of Trustees, it truly gives me great pleasure to congratulate our students—and family members and supporters of our students—for making UB a success. Equally, congratulations to the faculty, staff, administration, management and all UB stakeholders, including the five legacy institutions from which UB catapulted. I enjoin you to let our UB Black Jaguar roar be heard across the nation, the region and the world. Congratulations UB!"



Current UB Board of Trustees

Chairman	Mr. Godfrey Smith, Minister of Education's Rep
Vice Chair	Dr. Luz Longworth, Minister's Rep, Tourism Sector
ATLIB Representative	Mr. Fermin Magaña
Ministry of Education Representative	Dr. Yvonne Palma
Ministry of Health and Wellness Representative	Dr. Andrei Chell
Minister's Representative-Agriculture Sector	Mr. Eccleston Irving
NGO & Belize Network of NGOs Representative	Mr. Valdemar Andrade
UB Student Representative	Mr. Kyjuan King
Ministry of Agriculture Representative	Dr. Victoriano Pascual
National Trade Union Congress of Belize Rep	Mr. Luis Luke Martinez
Belize Council of Churches Representative	Dr. Fred Shyu
Minister's Representative-Industry Sector	Mr. Cresencio Sosa Sr.
UB Alumni Association Representative	Ms. Darlene Vernon
National Council for Education Representative	Ms. Jacqueline Welch
UB Faculty Representative	Mr. Timothy Dami
UB's President and Secretary to the Board	Dr. Vincent Palacio



Denise Baird-Robinson serves as the Senior Administrative Officer in the President's Office. Since 2000, she has been the essential support for every UB president. Denise began her career as Secretary I to the VP-Finance at UCB, the late Dr. Alvaro Rosado, in 1992. In 1998, she earned a Bachelor's in Business Administration from UCB, making her a proud alum of one of UB's legacy institutions. She also gained a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Galen University.

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE YEARS

Reflecting on these past 25 years, I am proud to have witnessed, firsthand, the remarkable transformation and perseverance of the University of Belize. I have had the privilege of working alongside dedicated Presidents and their respective management teams. Their tireless efforts to implement sound strategies, policies and procedures have laid the foundation for academic integrity and financial sustainability. One President once noted that each leader must have done something right, as the University continues to stand strong. I wholeheartedly agree. While there is always more that can be done, UB has stayed true to its core mission—providing accessible, affordable and quality education to the people of Belize. I also wish to recognize the many employees who have stayed the course over the years. Their commitment, sense of duty and pride in being part of the national university have played a vital role in ensuring the institution's continued progress. Through their dedication, they have helped the University maintain its purpose and build a foundation for sustainable operations for future generations.

- Denise Baird-Robinson, Senior Administrative Officer, President's Office since 2000; UCB 1998 alum.



Message from Hon. Anthony Sylvestre, Immediate Past UB Board Chairman

UCB alum (1994-1996), Attorney General (July 1, 2023-reappointed-current)

“The genius of the founding of the University of Belize is to be celebrated—what better occasion than now, on the quarter century anniversary of our national university. It is the place and space where the aspirations and development needs of the nation are nurtured through teaching and research. I am therefore grateful to have served as the chairman of our national university. Equally, my heart and soul swell with pride because I am an alum of one of its legacy institutions, UCB. The national university has and continues to open doors for so many Belizeans. Congratulations to the students, UB alumni, faculty, staff, administration and fellow Board members—the current members and those colleagues from past years. To the stakeholders in government, industry and otherwise, we look forward to generations more of collaboration and partnerships. Congratulations UB!”

(R) One of his former classmates (UCB 1994-1996) is Dr. Jay Coombs, who is in 2025 the United Nations Human Rights Advisor in Belize. Dr. Coombs recalled in a recent conversation: “One of the things we liked about Anthony was that he was able to straddle an array of ideas, sentiments and beliefs of people older than him. He was never afraid of differing views.” Hon. Anthony Sylvestre demitted chairmanship of the UB Board upon appointment as Attorney General. Many at UB recall that when Mr. Sylvestre was the Board Chairman, he proudly shared that he always credits UB with starting him on the path to where he is today. And those in the UB community who know him are not at all surprised. To echo the recollections of his former classmate Dr. Coombs, “I also recall him as a listener and an excellent writer.”



GLIMPSES OF UB BOARDS OVER THE YEARS (2000 – 2025)



Oct. 15, 2013: Board of Trustees under late Chairman G. Harrison Pilgrim+.

Front row L-R: Dr. Sharmayne Saunders, ATLIB; Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Hon. Patrick Faber; Ms. Anita Ack, UB Student Assn; Ms. Brenda Armstrong, Council of Churches; CEO, Mr. David Leacock **Back Row L-R:** Ms. Joan Burke, APAMO; Mr. Jose Alpuche, CEO, Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture; Mr. Kerry Belisle, UB Alumni Assn; Mr. Steve Spiro, Private Sector Tourism, (returning Board Member); Mr. Harrison Pilgrim, Appointee of the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports (returning Board Member/Chair); Mr. Luke Palacio, NTUCB; UB President Dr. Cary Fraser, Secretary to the Board; Mr. Gaspar Martinez+, Private Sector Agriculture; Mr. Deryck Satchwell, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports; Dr Peter Allen, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Health [not in pic: Mr Lynn Young, Private Sector Industry and Rev. Roosevelt Papouloute, National Council for Education]

Administrative and Academic Leadership 2025

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Office of the President | • Office of the Vice President |
| • Office of Budget and Finance | • Dept of Human Resource Management |
| • Office of the Registrar | • Dept of Public Safety |
| • Department of Physical Plant | • Marketing and Communications Dept |
| • Office of Student Affairs | • Office of Admissions |
| • Open and Distance Learning Unit | • The Institutional Advancement Office |

ACTIVE UB FACULTY AND STAFF ASSOCIATION, now Union



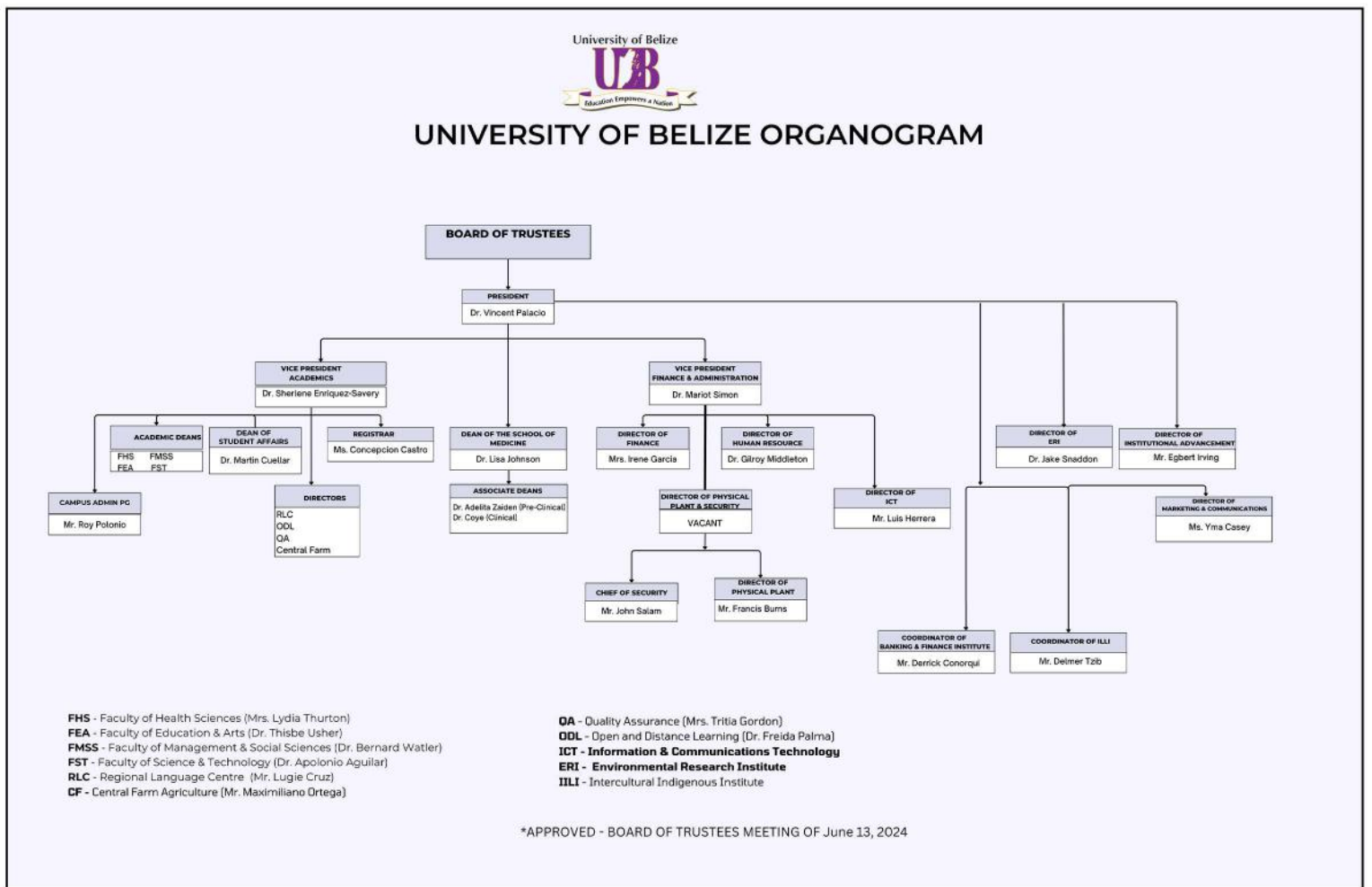
(C) Mrs. Juliane Pasos, President of the UB Faculty and Staff Union and FST faculty member

“The Faculty Representative on the Board will be appointed after consultations and an election are conducted among eligible faculty members.” And so it is. The genesis of the UB Faculty and Staff Association (now unionized) was during the first presidency of Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis, and it sure got the Tumultuous Years off to a roaring start! President Corinth Morter-Lewis recalled often being torn between competing undercurrents: her long-standing generational loyalty to the pre-amalgamated Belize Technical College and her commitment to being fair and transparent with the Faculty and Staff Association, then in its infancy, while overseeing

“The subvention doesn’t only impact the faculty and staff, but also the students what affects our university affects the entire country Belize.” – Juliane Pasos, UB-FST faculty member/past dean/chair; current President of UB’s Faculty and Staff Union, July 14, 2025: Source: LoveFM Noon news.

and ensuring the effective administration and management of pressing amalgamation and relocation issues that marked much of her first period as president. Then, the issues were about salary packages with the amalgamation, the main campus relocation to Belmopan, the matriculation issues such as the credit-system, etc. Today, in 2025, a Covid-cut budget to \$7 million to be reinstated is the strident call of the Union. Up through the time of going to press with this publication, GOB had reinstated for a total of 8.7 million dollars subvention. UB’s Faculty and Staff Union has protested (See July 14, 2025, news stories in Belize) and the UB Board of Trustees and GoB are in discussions.

UB ORGANOGRAM 2025



FHS - Faculty of Health Sciences (Mrs. Lydia Thurton)
FEA - Faculty of Education & Arts (Dr. Thisbe Usher)
FMSS - Faculty of Management & Social Sciences (Dr. Bernard Watler)
FST - Faculty of Science & Technology (Dr. Apolonio Aguilar)
RLC - Regional Language Centre (Mr. Lugie Cruz)
CF - Central Farm Agriculture (Mr. Maximiliano Ortega)

QA - Quality Assurance (Mrs. Tritia Gordon)
ODL - Open and Distance Learning (Dr. Freida Palma)
ICT - Information & Communications Technology
ERI - Environmental Research Institute
IILI - Intercultural Indigenous Institute

THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT AND ALL UB STAFF: OUR BACKBONE OVER THE YEARS!



(L-R) Ms. Yura Monsanto and Mrs. Hertha Gentle, former UB Human Resources Directors; Mr. Gilroy Middleton Jr., current HR Director

The late **Mr. Erlindo Pech+** held the post called Director of Personnel before it became Human Resources Director. **Mr. Dudley Heredia+** preceded Ms. Yura Monsanto and **Ms. Caryn Guerrero** preceded Dr. Middleton Jr.

"I always give credit to Records— Ms. Jackie from especially from Records throughout the years, Mr Omar—and to Mr. Ashton at Records today." -Lavern Banner, UB alum, 2005, 2011, 2025 (see her story on page 47).



(R) UB Records Office, Belize City campus, 2025: Ms. Jackie Noralez, with 33 combined years of UB history and experience from BTC, UCB and UB under her belt, confers with Kimberly Oluwadare, relative newcomer to the UB family (joined as Records Assistant in 2023).



BUDGET AND ACCOUNTS 2000-2025

• Government Subvention

GOB's annual subvention to UB was \$10 million prior to Covid. There was a Covid-cut to \$7 million. Up through the time of this magazine's publication, GOB had increased the subvention in July, 2025, bringing it to \$8.7 million. (See "Active Faculty and Staff Union" herein.)

• Seeking Income Sources to Supplement Government's Annual Subvention

"In our strategic plan, which is called RISE, the second letter is "i" and it speaks to innovative; even in our budgeting we have to be innovative in order to source funds to do what we do here at the University," President Palacio noted. "Whether it is to raise funds for the President's Bursary or any of several projects whose income contributes a little to the running of the operation of this university, sourcing income and resources beyond the Government's subvention is ongoing."

• Increasing Enrolment Through Relevant Program Offerings

"Another way in which we raise funds is by offering relevant programs to the community. One is our criminal justice and criminology program- a relatively new program - and ever since we started (this has been the third year) enrolment has been no less than 100 students every time. Students are looking forward to these programs. Therefore, we have to be innovative, even with our programs. It can be what people need, and then when we do this, the enrolment will increase, so we do count on our enrolment to help us with our budget as well." These words of President Palacio were echoed as well by former Presidents Sankat and Mahung.



(Above right front) Ms. Sandra Miranda, former UB Director of Finance meets with budgeting team, circa late 2000s.



(L) Dr. Mariot Simon 2025 Vice President of Finance and Administration.

(R) The late Mr. Harry Liu+, Chief Financial Officer in UB's early years (Far R) Dr. Geraldo Flowers, Director of the then Office of Business Development and Administration in UB's early years; (Below R) Mr. Ian Sangster also held the post.



FINANCIAL DIRECTORS 2000 - 2025

Dr. Geraldo Flowers	Vice President, Finance and Administration
Mr. Harry Lui	Interim Vice President, Finance and Administration
Mr. Harry Lui	Chief Financial Officer
Ms. Sandra Miranda	Director of Finance
Mrs. Sherlene Julien	Director of Finance
Mr. Ian Sangster	Director of Finance
Mrs. Irene Garcia	Director of Finance
Dr. Mariot Simon	Vice President, Finance and Administration

For UB Financial Statements, one can easily download annual reports that contain the audited financial statements. Go to: <https://www.ub.edu.bz> › annual reports

• Collecting Accounts Receivables



Although online payment options exist now, the option for cash or debit payments continues to be available.

(Upper L) Mr. Orlando Palma, Head of UB Accounts interacts with students at the Cashier station at UB Belmopan, July 2025.



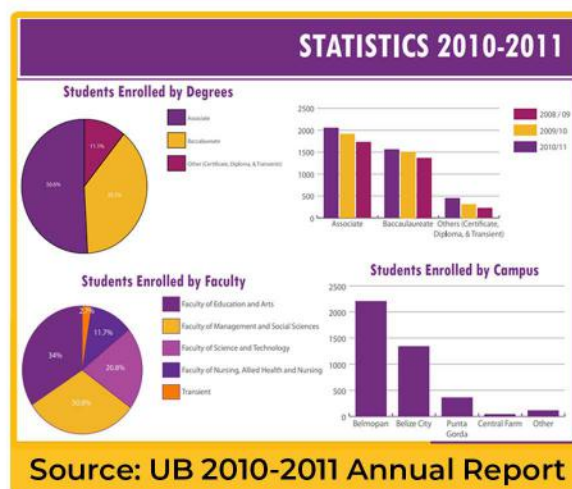
(Lower L) Mr. Orlando Palma, Head of Accounts Receivables, in Admin Building, Belmopan campus with Accounts Asst. Delta Flores, 2025.

Mr. Palma, in an interview for this magazine, recalled the early days of “manual registration, when there was a long line of students doing registration as “a whole snake of students doing registration! They would have to go from office to office, getting their papers in order. They were triplicates at the time. Now—all of that now—it’s just virtual! They could sit in the comfort of their home—thanks to technology—everything is now online. They could do the Registration online, and they could even make their payments online, with ease and comfort to them. I would like to say congratulations to UB-25th anniversary!”

Then he continued with a small chuckle: “I happen to be a little-just a little bit-older than UB! 25 years, right! I am happy to still be with UB on this long journey, 25 years later on. And I have seen myself moving from UB-Toledo, then Belize City and Belmopan where I am currently located.”

Indeed, online payments are a win-win option university-wide. As Mr. Palma pointed out, “Students “don’t have to travel with large sums of monies. For those who opt to pay at the office here, that facility is still available, and they can pay with their debit cards/credit cards, or they can do it online, or from any one of the banks, or from their student portal directly they can make payment.” Mr. Palma is both a UCB and UB alum. He was part of the first class and the last UCB Toledo cohort, earning an Associate in Business Administration in 1999. In 2006, he obtained his Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration (Accounting) from UB. He then pursued and achieved a Master’s degree from Galen University. Currently, he serves as the Head of Accounts at UB. Additionally, Orlando Palma is a strong advocate for lifelong learning, having earned three different certifications from UB’s Banking and Finance Institute.

Said Mr. Palma speaking as a UB alum, “This is where it all started for me. I have always embraced education.” In particular, he points out that although UB offers a broad range of degrees, “For those who may not want to do an entire degree, there are some certification courses. You take a course at your own pace—for example only on Thursday night, 6 o’clock to 8:30 for 14 weeks, and before you know it, you are done! And if you are in the working field, this makes it much easier for you to do those courses.” Orlando Palma is also very proud of being able to unequivocally state that UB is fulfilling its mission of impacting national development: “We see UB graduates all over. And I am privy to seeing the kind of numbers coming out in all different programs. And in business, for example, now we have some more specialized formats: statistics, GIS ... and now we are starting the School of Medicine. ... And that is what the country needs – that Belize needs!”



THE UB IDENTITY: A GENERATION INTO EXISTENCE

“An identity is always something that is under construction. It’s so dynamic that our generation will have certain expectations and certain requirements of its national university. But in the future generations, those expectations are likely to be modified or even changed. The physical markers [the logo, slogan, the flag, UB merchandise] are important, but those are expressions of the clothes of UB—what people see or hear of what we do. And yes, there is a lot to be proud of, but ultimately, our graduates are the proof of the pudding.”

-Dr. Angel Cal, UB’s first president; UCB’s president 1990-2000



“When I see students from the primary school walk across the campus going home to lunch or coming home in the evening, I wonder if they are thinking that when they graduate that they will come here to the national university. I advise all my deans, all my faculty to look at projects and activities that could contribute to national development beyond these walls, and not just the community; we tell the NGOs, the CBOs (community-based organizations), the government that they could come HERE for solutions. They could come HERE for training—making sure the university is for Belizeans, is for Belize. The UB identity has to be one linked to relevance, to resilience, to multiculturalism.”

- UB’s current President, Dr. Vincent Palacio

Globally, universities have adjusted to and will continue to adjust to new policies, new world orders, new technological developments, new calls from society and new stakeholder inputs. The UB identity is 25 years-old, buttressed by a generation of experience and further cemented in the bedrock of its five legacy institutions. UB is here! UB deh ya! UB esta aqui! Anuhoun UB ya! A UB, yan ti'i te'ex! (Mopan Maya) Wank li UB arin! (Q'eqchi' Maya) UBe' wayano'one'! (Yucatec)

“My experience at UB helped me understand the importance of research, community engagement and critical thinking in nation-building. I continue expanding my educational journey through various academic and non-academic activities.. I am currently engaged in academic collaborations, public history events and mentorship, always striving to build bridges between past and present to inspire future generations.”

-Delmer Tzib, Director, UB's Intercultural Indigenous Language Institute; UB Alum 2009.

“When I look at the UB identity, now we have embraced the concept of this UB Black Jaguars! You've seen it all around. The students are proud of wearing their shirts, especially on Fridays, staff, —myself—out in my UB Black Jaguars on Friday! I'm proud of it ... The material that we are using, the, the colorful look of the shirts—very attractive—I am proud to wear it. So, we are embracing that concept of the UB Black Jaguars, not only for students, but for faculty and staff as well.” -Orlando Palma, Head of UB Accounts Dept; UB alum (2006) and UCB alum (1999)



(L) 2015 UB Science fair (Below): 2006 students at UB Orientation Booth

(Above Lower L) UB Students in 2007 Sept. celebrations parade; (Above M) UB Students at 2023 public outreach booth; (Above R) Music anyone?

“Students I think define what a university becomes or what a university is. They carry so much energy; they are the lifeblood of any university. The energy they generate—the viewpoints they bring—they are the ones who are most important in the life of a university. And that is why I say the Alumni Association is such an important part of UB.”

-Dr. Corinth-Morter Lewis, UB's second and longest serving president



“Just like in many, many universities abroad, the varsity sports program is a key ally in developing the University’s brand and in fostering unity and community around that brand. And here at UB we are no different. We have utilized the imagery, the language of the Black Jaguars in all our recruitment and in our orientation materials and videos since the early 2000s—such that over the years, we can readily envision, for example, a 17 or 16 year-old receiving an application from UB around the dinner table, talking to mommy and daddy or a guardian about the possibility—the honor—the opportunity to become a Black Jaguar ... in fact, the ATLIB competition with the UB Black Jaguars sports schedule is part of our orientation outputs.”

- Dr. Martin Cuellar, Dean of Students



(L - R) 2008 UB Lady Jaguars ATLIB Volleyball Champions; 2011-2012 UB Male ATLIB Volleyball Champions; UB Black Jaguars women – Western regional ATLIB female volleyball champions 2024 - picture source: William Ysaguirre, *AmandalaBelize*, Oct. 23, 2024





(L: circa 2002) January UB Admissions-PR -Recruitment Booth at BDF Fair. L-R: Dr. Martin Cuellar, Dean of Students; S. Woods with daughter Robin (now Dr. Silvaana Udz), Head of Office of Public Information-Transition Year 2000-2001 and UB faculty member through 2015; Dorla Rosado (now Dr.), Director of Admissions and Student Affairs in 2000); her late husband, Dr. Alvaro Rosado+ also served as Vice-President); Kevin Geban, Dean UB-FMSS 2000-2005; currently Senior Lecturer, FMSS

“We set the ball in a good place, starting in 2000 we knew from then that the concept of student development was surrounded by the principle of participatory learning, values education, and teaching and imbuing in our students the core essence of social responsibility. “

– Dr. Martin Cuellar, VP Student Affairs 2000-2004; Dean of Student Affairs 2004-2006 and 2019 - current.



It was under his aegis and the PR Office that the UB logo and slogan contest occurred in UB's first academic year. UB student (Ms. Alvaro) won for the UB slogan “Education Empowers a Nation.” (The Student Services Office also has been generating seasonal event mottos since the past 15 years.) Later, in 2009, a similar contest occurred to choose a design for a distinctive UB graduation gown to replace the generic gown. The new gown reflects UB's colors and national multicultural identity on a UB sash that graduates get to keep (First picture: January 2012; Second picture: June 2016 graduation). The new UB gowns were first used at the 2011 graduation. The then Chief Justice of Belize Dr. Abdulai Conteh was one of the judges for the UB Gown competition, as UB used precedent of the country's judicial robes having also been revised to be more relevant. Indeed, being “responsive to national needs” tops the list of eight UB core values.

The identity of UB is rooted in its Belizean-ness, its environmental focus—and its Black Jaguars! Its regional as well as its international reach is to be applauded, of course, but what gives me cold seed [goose pimples] is its national reach: I see so many people I have taught in all areas of Belizean life being leaders and mentors and productive citizens—key players in Belize's development. –Dr. Silvaana Udz, former lecturer BELCAST, UCB, UB; UB's first Public Relations Officer along with the late Rosalie T. Staines as UB's Marketing Director (Year 2000); Assistant Professor UB, Faculty of Education and Arts (2005-2015), with assignment as UB's Head of Advertising and Public Relations (now rebranded as UB's Marketing and Communications Office) during the tenancy of President Santos Mahung.

University of Belize



THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE

www.ub.edu.bz

Belmopan (Main) Campus
Hummingbird Avenue
Belmopan, Cayo
Belize
+501 822-1000/822-3680

Business Campus
University Drive
P.O. Box 990
Belize City, Belize
+501 223-2733

Education Campus
University Drive
P.O. Box 990
Belize City, Belize
+501 223-0256

Central Farm Campus
65 Miles G.P. Highway
Cayo, Belize
+501 824 3775

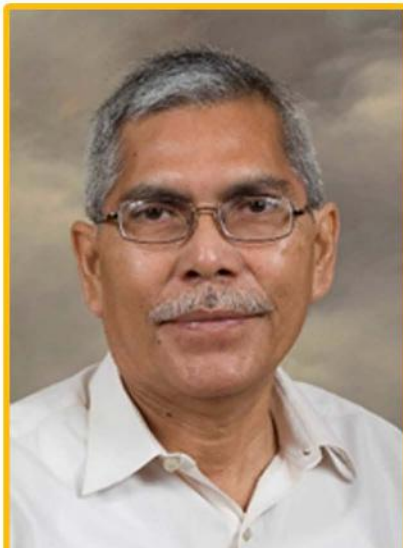
Punta Gorda Campus
José Mana Nunez St.
Punta Gorda Town Toledo,
Belize
+501 702 2720

Calabash Caye Field
Station
Turneffe Atolls
Central Belize

Hunting Caye Field
Station
Hunting Caye
Sapodilla Range

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
The Marketing and Communications Office
501 822-1000 Ext. 1430 | 1432 | 1433
communications@ub.edu.bz

THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE EXTENDS HEARTFELT THANKS TO ITS PRESIDENTS FROM 2000-2025





Belize School of Nursing



University of Belize

UB

Education Empowers a Nation



UB is more than just a name
Much more than buildings, books and grades.
It transcends time; it defies space
It is enduring- a grand idea.
It cannot be confined or chained.
Its influence radiates near, far, wide
Permeating these walls
This land, our skies
It soars aloft
It rides the tides
Transforming
Reconstructing
Metamorphosing lives.

The above is the concluding excerpt from Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis's poem "Tribute to Our Pioneers" in her book *Moments in Time*, Vol. 1, p. 13. This poem honors the legacy institutions while embracing the birth of UB. Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis is a preeminent Belizean writer and patriot, the second UB president and its longest serving in its 25 years. She is herself an alum of the legacy institution Belize Technical College and was a former lecturer and Head of Department and Vice-Principal there.

