

**Welcome Remarks delivered by Ms. Yvonne Walkes, Chairman,  
Barbados Accreditation Council at the Opening of the Workshop on  
“Establishing Quality Indicators for Institutional and Programme  
Accreditation” at the PomMarine Hotel, Hastings, Christ Church on  
Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 at 9.00a.m.**

The Executive Director, Barbados Accreditation Council and facilitator for this workshop, members of the Accreditation and Programme Approval Committee, Principals/Proprietors of private and public post-secondary or tertiary education institutions and training providers, Staff of the Barbados Accreditation Council, the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen: Good Morning.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Barbados Accreditation Council, I wish to extend a warm welcome to you to this our first workshop for the calendar year which focuses on the theme: **“Establishing Quality Indicators for Institutional and Programme Accreditation”**. Only a few months ago, the Council hosted the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE) which examined the challenges of balancing quality and quantity in this

dynamic global environment in which the Caribbean tertiary education sector operates today. Some of the strategies identified for the way forward included the need for improved innovation and creativity amongst institutions; and the implementation of effective management systems for evaluating quality within institutions.

This workshop is seen as critical in light of a survey of ninety (90) tertiary educational providers which was conducted in May, 2009 by Caribbean Development Research Services (CADRES) on behalf of the Council. The survey was primarily aimed at ascertaining whether quality indicators were established within these institutions.

Overall, it was found that there may not have been a clear understanding of the concept “quality indicator”. Further, amongst other findings, it was revealed that:

- 58% had a governing/advisory body structure in place;
- 46% perceived that the financing allocated for educational resources was adequate;
- 37% perceived that their financial resources were adequate to meet long term requirements;
- 35% had sufficient resources (computers) to meet students' needs;
- 45% had stakeholder interaction in the programme approval process; and
- 39% reviewed their assessment policies annually.

Given the Council's thrust within the next few months to encourage accreditation of institutions and programmes of study in Barbados, it is

crucial that the tertiary educational providers have a clear understanding of the concepts “quality” and “quality indicators”. Further, that they be equipped with the necessary techniques and tools to successfully meet the Council’s accreditation standards.

I have noted that this workshop has as its objectives to:

- a. Agree on a collective definition of “quality” and “quality indicators”;
  - b. Evaluate the Institution’s Quality Indicators within the context of the BAC’s Institutions and Programme Accreditation Standards;
  - c. Identify Strengths and Challenges/Areas for Improvement of the Quality Indicators;
  - d. Identify Strategies for successful implementation of Quality Indicators;
- and

e. Produce a Plan of Action for assessing the progress of implementation.

As you may be aware, the concept of “quality” continues to be debated worldwide, particularly as it relates to tertiary education and training in light of varying perspectives from students, employers, institutions, governments and other stakeholders. Indeed, the term “quality indicator” suggests that quality in tertiary education and training can be measured or assessed for a particular purpose; and in the context of this workshop, for institutional or programme accreditation. It is interesting to note that at this workshop that the participants will seek to reach a consensus on the two concepts.

The Barbados Accreditation Council takes a partnership approach to the quality assurance of tertiary providers through on-going monitoring, institutional self-evaluation and peer evaluation conducted by an external team of competent individuals.

Through consultation with tertiary providers, professional bodies and other stakeholders, the Council has established standards for Institutional and Programme Accreditation which take into account the local peculiarities of the tertiary educational system, whilst incorporating international best practices for global competitiveness.

We anticipate that local and foreign providers offering tertiary education and training in Barbados will demonstrate their commitment towards quality assurance and quality enhancement by voluntary adherence to the Council's Institutional and Programme Standards. .

We recognize that there is considerable variation amongst tertiary providers in Barbados, as revealed by the May 2009 research study which showed that 65% of the providers were small-sized (that is, with less than 100 students). Further, in terms of age of establishment, approximately 36.1% were shown

to be “young” (that is, 0 to 5 years); the same percentage was recorded for “maturing” providers (that is, between 6 to 20 years). The Institutional and Programme Accreditation standards are therefore intentionally broad enough to allow for diversity in the institutional processes and systems, creativity and innovation.

Worldwide, students, parents, governments, employers and other stakeholders are demanding accountability, value for money and questioning the relevance of tertiary education and training to employment needs. Barbados is no exception.

It is anticipated that this workshop will provide the opportunity for principals/owners/managers to evaluate the strengths of their institutions and discern where there are areas for improvement. Self-evaluation is critical to improving the effectiveness of institutions and though the idea of assessing institutional or programme success may even seem daunting,

threatening, or intruding on academic autonomy or limited time available for teaching and administrative responsibilities, the data acquired should allow tertiary providers to reflect on factors such as:

- **How are we doing?** – which measures where the institution is now;
- **How do we know how we are doing?** – which identifies the evidence which support this; and
- **What are we going to do now?** - which shows the next steps necessary for improvement.

The data gathered could also be used for benchmarking purposes as an institution may seek to compare itself and/programme against its competitor(s) with a view to even adopting best practices for improvement.

It is therefore intended that through this forum that participants will be able to identify vital data that should be collected, analysed and evaluated to assess the quality of the institution and its programmes/courses of study.

The Council will continue to provide technical support and assistance to ensure that tertiary providers meet its Institutional and Programme Accreditation Standards. In addition, we are planning to produce a toolkit which will enable tertiary providers to effectively establish and implement indicators for quality assurance and quality enhancement.

The programme indicates that the workshop should be highly interactive and informative.

Best wishes for a highly productive workshop and the Council looks forward to working with providers as we, together, seek to enhance tertiary educational provision in Barbados. Thank You.