

BALANCING QUALITY AND QUANTITY IN TERTIARY EDUCATION: THE CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE

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By Vivienne Roberts

INTRODUCTION

First, let me thank the organizers of this conference for inviting me to be a part of this important event in the Caribbean. When I was asked to speak, I willingly agreed because the topic is one in which I have great personal and professional interest. Busy as I am with many administrative duties, I have found it increasingly challenging to find the time to continue to research and make presentations on important topics such as this. This invitation has provided me firstly, with the incentive to carefully reflect on the inherent challenges in the management of quality and quantity in tertiary education in the region and secondly, with the opportunity to share my observations with a discriminating audience such as yours.

As you will agree at the very outset or as we progress through the discourse, this is a very complex, even contradictory, topic. Therefore, I am mindful that some of you may not agree with much of the substance of what I will say; many of you may disapprove of how I say what I have to say, and most of you will probably forget the majority of what I do say. However, I trust that a few of you will engage with the topic and approve of both the form and substance of the argument as well as the quality and quantity of the presentation, and that you will find a few useful gems which you can further analyse, interrogate and apply to your own settings long after the conference is over.

The theme of the conference implies that there is a dynamic relationship between quality and quantity and that the management of this relationship presents a challenge globally. I assert that we also have a regional challenge which has a unique flavour and particular dimensions. It is true to say that the exact nature of this quality – quantity relationship is difficult to pin down and challenging to balance. Whether your picture of balancing is that of the bespectacled alchemist painstakingly matching his small metallic weight with the almost microscopic grains of medicinal powders or that of the acrobat precariously poised on one leg on that undulating wire, you will agree that at best, balancing can be serious and at worst, dangerous business.

I am told by the neurolinguistic experts that some of us prefer to use visual, others like the auditory and yet others are more comfortable with kinaesthetic representative systems. For those who relate better to images conjured up by words, I thought for a moment I would look carefully at the topic and seek to find some analogous word pairs with which I could draw parallels to the quantity versus quality picture. I came up with

“brain versus braun’, “talent versus effort”, “nurture versus nature”, “depth versus breadth” and “lyrics versus melody”.

“What do these have in common?” one may ask and I would answer:” They are opposites to a certain extent but they are also complementary factors that can combine to achieve a goal more effectively”. In becoming a successful athlete for example, brain and braun, talent and effort, nature and nurture are quite different features but combined and carefully managed, constitute a recipe for success. No doubt, the music lovers will agree that a balance between lyrics and melody will also produce a better song. I would go further to say that the teachers will agree that both depth and breadth should be reflected in the work of the high performing student. In the end, what appears to be common to all of these pairs, is that firstly, a combination of both factors is more likely to result in successful achievement of the goal; secondly, both have to be carefully managed for maximum results and thirdly, achieving the right balance could be challenging.

A question of purpose

As we contemplate balancing quality and quantity, it is important to examine why these imperatives are on the agenda in the first place and to reflect on what we are trying to achieve. It is well known that formal higher education began fairly late in this region with the coming of the first University College of the West Indies in 1948. Additionally, it is an open secret that Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados have been forthright in their intention and drive to achieve developed country status by 2020 and 2025 respectively, and this goal carries with it the need to increase age participation rates (APR) to between 50% and 60%. Undoubtedly, they need both quality and quantity tertiary education in order to catch up with the competitors and achieve such lofty goals in the relatively short time.

Robert Arnove (1996) in reporting on Quantity and Quality in Nicaraguan Education commented that:

“The goal of education for democracy, for critical participatory citizenship must remain an ideal to strive for - just as the elusive goal of achieving both quantity and quality must be attempted no matter how difficult the balancing act may be.”

The implication here is that for him in that context, the simultaneous achievement of both quality and quantity in education is an ideal. However, across the world, the imperative of provision of access to quality education for all has been enshrined in many creeds, mission, vision and policy statements and none more emphatically than in the universal declaration of Human Rights which states that:

*Everyone has a right to education.
Education shall be free, at least in the elementary stages,
Elementary education shall be compulsory.
Technical and professional education shall be made generally available,
and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.*

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
(Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) adopted by the United Nations, Article 26.)

In this declaration, excellence, diversity and expansion are seen as secondary goals, geared towards the primary goal of the development of the human potential. It appears therefore that the overarching goal of managing quality and quantity is towards personal, national and regional development.

I have chosen as my specific topic: *Balancing Quality and Quantity in Tertiary Education: The Caribbean Challenge*. As I indicated earlier, this is a complex and wide ranging topic so I would like to focus my presentation by responding to four questions:

1. What is meant by the terms quality and quantity and what is the fundamental relationship between these parameters?
2. Why is it necessary to measure and manage quality and quantity and towards what end?
3. What are some of the relevant challenges in the Caribbean?
4. How can the relationship be managed?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is often said that quality is a subjective concept. Like love or beauty, it is difficult to describe but one recognizes it when one sees or experiences it. Each of us, at some time, has had to admit when we see an ugly object admired, treasured and purchased at an auction at a very high price by another person, that beauty is indeed in the eye of the beholder.

Additionally, all of us would have experienced that feeling of lightheadedness, giddiness and irrational adoration of another person that some of us call love. In those situations, it does not matter what others think because the subject is working alone from a unique perspective. However, in education, since we have to work collectively to measure quality, we have to find some common ground.

Looking back over the years, Price (2000) has argued that

“Quality education has been and still is the privileging of particular subjects: in Europe, until recently the languages and (reconstructed) cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. In imperial China, a quality education was shown by the ability to recall classical texts, the ancient poets, to write poetry in their style and to have a good calligraphy

I will also borrow and share with you a current definition of quality as perceived and recently articulated by a group of providers of tertiary education in Barbados.

Quality is meeting the needs of all learners by offering an experience that is value for money. It involves continuous self improvement of all stakeholders, provisions and services while conforming to and rising above all established and recognized standards, thereby stimulating demand.

The idea that quality institutions are exclusive, expensive and well endowed is also one which is familiar to us but is changing. Quality has been embraced by the University of the West Indies (UWI) as “fitness for Purpose” so from an institutional perspective, quality education would be the type of education that produces the outcomes articulated in its mission and vision and would also gain public acceptance. In as much as other universities in the region and the world may define their purpose differently, quality may have different shades of meaning and different measures.

Williams (1992) has viewed universities from three different perspectives - firstly as self governing communities of scholars with students being learners of a discipline, indeed apprentice scholars; secondly, as public sector corporations with students being trainees for varying occupations and thirdly, as enterprises in the knowledge industry with students being customers. My guess is that the 7 universities in the English Speaking Caribbean will identify with all of these positions to different degrees and may find also that different Faculties within them may have differing postures about mission. The point which is being made is that quality education will be viewed differently, depending on context, history and sociology and that a mission focused on the students as customer will take a different approach to meeting students’ needs but is as valid as one in which the most important consideration is for the student to become a world class scholar.

Having said that, particularly in the OECD countries, one has to recognize the gradual movement towards a convergence of higher education standards, through such initiatives as AHELO (Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes), for example.

What is Quantity?

A dictionary definition of quantity is “ the number, the specified amount of a thing or the aspect of anything which can be measured, weighed or counted”. For countries, critical quantitative data include the area of the land mass, the population count and the GDP. For hospitals, it is often the number of beds. These reflect the size and the capacity of the country or institution and serve to establish some very broad and basic parameters often for the purpose of evaluation and comparison. However, you would agree that depending on the purpose of an investigation, there are scores of other quantitative measures that are available or that can be created for further use.

Two points are important here. First, in areas other than education and even in the field of education prior to the 1960s, the discourse on quantity may have focused exclusively on numbers of inputs – plant, people and resources as well as on outputs – number of graduates enrolling and completing a qualification. Currently, the discourse on quantity in tertiary education extends well beyond that, extending to indicators such as gender

ratios; diversity indicators such as inclusiveness related to ethnicity, educational background, disabilities or different abilities as this is sometimes styled, and age groups; per capita cost, tuition fees and economic cost ratios; internet penetration, broadband access and cost. In Barbados in particular, there is frequent reference to the number of graduates per household.

The second point which is being made is that in our current environment, as the society has accepted the need for and the processes for assessing excellence, quality is being quantified and “quantity is being qualified” so that the quality versus quantity debate becomes muted and superseded not by “if” but by “how”. In other words, if the imperatives include the simultaneous creation of knowledge societies and a skilled workforce, quality and quantity must coexist and the challenge is not so much one of choice but more so one of management. It is interesting to acknowledge also that quantitative measures called indicators are not only quantitative data but also quality measures and are limited only by the creativity and objective of the researcher.

Many of us have been fascinated by the United Nations Quality of Life Index in which Barbados has enjoyed a consistently high position. Not to be outdone, I must add that I was particularly pleased to read in the newspaper in July this year that Jamaica had progressed very rapidly from fiftieth place to third in the 2009 Happiness Planet Index published by Britain’s Economics Foundation. This index is tied to human well being and environmental impact and Jamaica trails behind only Costa Rica and the Dominican republican in the region.

For the purposes of this discourse, quantity is being seen as the size of the enterprise in terms of student enrolment, however defined; staff involvement, however counted; physical plant, assets and resources, however acquired as long as the acquisition is by legal means; and financing, whatever the formula and the income streams used. In a world environment where access is a given and where the massification and democratisation of tertiary education are taken for granted, I suggest that the quantity dimensions must include measures of inclusiveness. So in addition to absolute numbers, attention must be given to the numbers of different groups related to gender, disabilities, age ranges and diversity in educational backgrounds.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUALITY AND QUANTITY

What then is the relationship between quantity and quality? Is it an inverse, direct or other type of relationship?

Some like Radford (1997) imply a potential inverse relationship when he says: “It is now more or less unquestioned that national prosperity depends upon having a successful system of higher education. It is manifestly the case that such systems everywhere are expanding enormously, and it is clear that the sheer numbers and the resulting cost are causing major problems.”

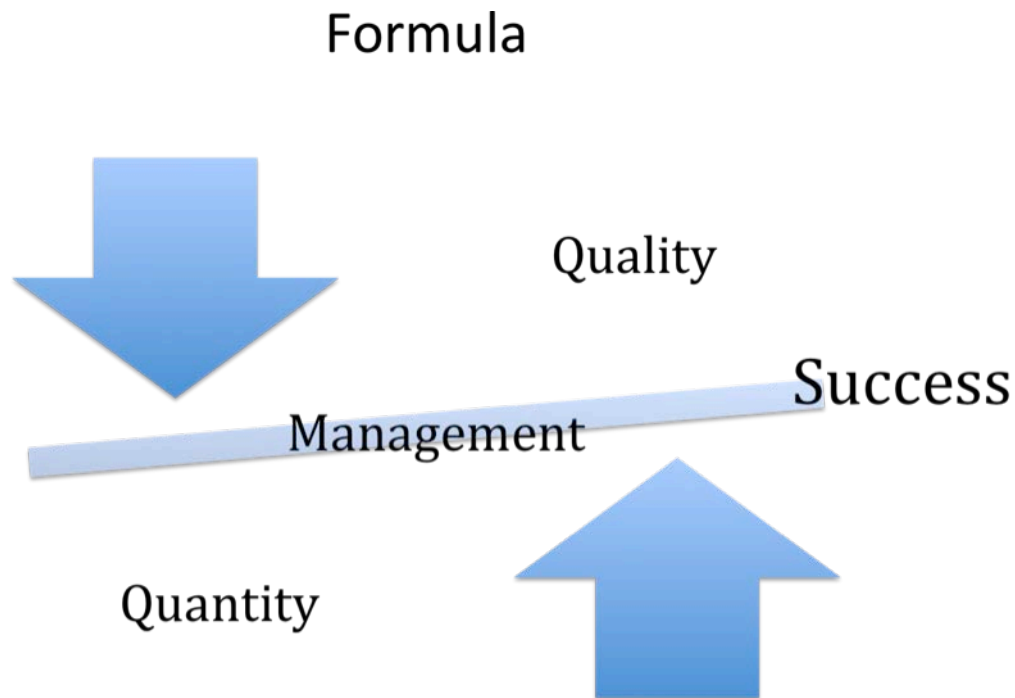
Additionally, Daniel, Kanwar and Uvalic-Trumvic (2009) conclude that “the aims of wide access, high quality and low cost are not achievable, even in principle, with traditional models of higher education based on classroom teaching in campus communities.”

Some in this room, in reminiscing about the good old days, may say that in the nineteen fifties and even the sixties, tertiary education institutions in the Caribbean were few, student enrolment was small, entry requirements were uniformly based on the same Cambridge Higher Schools or Advanced level qualifications, the graduates were well read and well mannered, readily employed and very productive. The same commentator on the current situation may state that tertiary education institutions are numerous, varied in their types, mission and purpose; student enrolment is high and an enormous number of students are accommodated through open and distance learning; entry qualifications are variable, learners are of differing educational, social and economic background and fit into widely different age ranges. It is true to say also that some current graduates are neither well read nor well mannered, not readily employed and not very productive. However, can we attribute these differences in diminishing quality to increasing quantity? Is there an inverse relationship?

I believe that a close examination of the reality will show that increasing enrolment may be associated with the fall off in quality but that there are several other factors which have an impact. Additionally, these factors can be managed to mitigate the fall off in quality.

It may be useful to use a mathematical metaphor or equation to illustrate the quality/quantity relationship and I propose that

Quality/Quantity x strategic management = success.



I will return to this formula later.

THE CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE

Early tertiary education in the Caribbean enjoyed historical ties with Britain and as such quality was implied by the nature and quantum of inputs, alliances with prestigious institutions, the use of external examiners and such methods. The quality of small elitist institutions was taken for granted and uniformity of inputs and outputs assumed. However, as the numbers, diversity, cost and competition increased, stakeholders began to ask questions and demand accountability. In the Caribbean, the evolution of external validation through accreditation is a fairly recent activity. Employers, students, professional bodies and governments are demanding the demonstration of quality as quantity increases.

In the Caribbean, the quality/ quantity challenge is exacerbated by the small size of member states, the existence of multi-island states, diversity of institutions in terms of size and diverging missions, technology limitations, infancy of the tertiary education system, limited research and its application, lack of coordination and harmonization of the tertiary education system, growing internal and external competition, on - going financial constraints and newly emerging national accreditation systems.

The Realities of Quantity

We have had significant changes in our tertiary education enrolment and marked expansion in the tertiary education institutional pool.

- From data collected from the UWI's Tertiary Level Institutions Unit (TLIU), now External Relations for Inter and Intra-institutional Collaboration Unit (ERIIC), it can be seen that between 1996 – 2006, there was approximately a 15% increase in the enrolment in public tertiary institutions other than UWI in the English Speaking Caribbean,
- At UWI in the last four years, there has been a 13% increase in the UWIDEC/Open Campus Distance Education enrolment in degree programmes; 23% increase in total enrolment at the Cave Hill campus, 11% at Mona, Jamaica and 15% at St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, interestingly also resulting in an overall 15% increase from 35,457 in 2005 to 41,756 in 2009.
- There has been also an increase in the number of public universities in the pool to include University of Trinidad and Tobago and University of Technology, Jamaica and an increase in the indigenous private universities to include University of the Southern Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago; University of the Northern Caribbean, Jamaica and St George's University, Grenada and in university colleges to include University College of the Caribbean and B and B University College both in Jamaica.
- It is common knowledge that there is growing competition from foreign providers based within and outside of the Caribbean borders but with home bases mainly in the USA and United Kingdom and from virtual providers as far afield as New Zealand and Australia.
- Many small tertiary providers have become operational across the Caribbean with more than thirty in Barbados where they work along side the tertiary institutions – Codrington College, UWI, BIMAP, Barbados Community College, Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, Erdiston Teachers College and the Caribbean Meteorological Institute.

Small Size

The English Speaking Caribbean has about 6.5 million persons with Jamaica having under 3 million, Trinidad over a million and Montserrat having less than 10,000 persons. In 2007, tertiary enrolment ranged from approximately 4% in Anguilla to over 30% in Barbados. Institutions range in size from a couple hundreds to over 40,000 at UWI. the latter being head count.

Many Caricom countries including Antigua and Barbuda, the Cayman Islands, , Turks and Caicos, Grenada and Carricou, St Kitts and Nevis, The Bahamas, The British Virgin Islands, St Vincent and the Grenadines all include more than one island and the issues of small size and geographical isolation are further exacerbated. In some instances, excellence is associated with small size but in education, it is noteworthy that very small size may present as important a quality challenge as large size, since it is important to have minimum numbers to promote some competition and achieve economies of scale.

Technology Limitation

Research has shown that access to computers and to the internet varies within and among the countries of the Caribbean. However, communications technology including cell phones and iPods is on the increase and offer emerging and expanding opportunities for On line and Distance Education. Access to broadband is improving in spite of the fact that the cost is still unacceptably high in many countries. The UWI in general and the Open Campus in particular are in continual contact with staff, students, course coordinators, vendors, clients via the internet. Access to computers and the internet at the 42 sites of the Open Campus is an attempt to provide access to the geographically, economically and physically disadvantaged. Gone are the days when the only option for a degree was residential, face to face education or correspondence courses mainly from England. Today, learners can access education anytime, anywhere and through various media and modes.

The success stories of Broadband raising Rural Incomes in India are many, including those of rural women who use telecentres to access and provide sales and inventory control information. There are stories of the use of telemedicine in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. The 2009 World Bank Information and Communication for Development Report states that “Broadband has played a significant role in Korea’s overall economy and improving its economic competitiveness. Korea’s media, automotive and banking industries have benefitted.’

There are also many success stories in the Caribbean but educators and researchers need to study these and tell our own stories, sharing our own best practices.

Emerging Tertiary Education System

When the Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI) began its operation in 1990 with such persons as Alister McIntyre, Alfred Sangster and Norma Holder, one of its immediate challenges was the harmonization of programmes and standards within the region. It was mandated to assist with the development of a regional accreditation mechanism which is still to become functional. In the meantime, much has been done by individual institutions, national groupings, national accreditation bodies, professional accreditation bodies, professional associations and bodies, international networks to bring about coordination and harmonization of standards. National accreditation bodies are now operational in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, St Kitts/ Nevis, Antigua and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Many others are at different stages of establishment. There are regional standards that guide Associate degrees and there are regional and some national qualifications frameworks. There are formal articulation arrangements among many institutions that provide multiple pathways for entry to tertiary education.

Finance

The matter of finance is always a complex and difficult challenge in the best of times and particularly so in times of economic downturn. It is fair to say that the tertiary education pool includes both predominantly publicly funded, predominantly privately

funded and privately funded institutions with the first category being in the majority. These include the regional and state universities and the national, community and state colleges. These institutions obtain funding not only from governments but also increasingly so from student tuition, private sector grants, philanthropic contributions and investments, perhaps in that order of magnitude. In light of competing social demands in the areas of health and social welfare, many governments have found it difficult to maintain the level of contribution required to support expansion but some, including Barbados, have been consistent in the level of support to general education generally and tertiary education in particular.

Many institutions are wary of tuition fee increases beyond a level which is perceived to be affordable to potential students. Some like UWI keep this at 20% or less of economic cost. Many are increasing their efforts at partnerships with the private sector through contract training, sponsorship of buildings, sporting activities and commissioned research. Alumni drives, philanthropic giving and related tax exemptions are becoming better organized and more widespread. Some attempts are being made to consider open and distance learning as a method of reducing per capita cost but experience has shown that while this may be the case in the medium to long term, the set up costs are considerable. Having said that, Open and Distance learning should be encouraged not only for the long term economic value but also for the potential for increasing access to many who might not have had the opportunity otherwise.

Open and Distance Learning

Daniel, Kanwar and Uvulic-Trumbic (2009) report that “in 1998, there were only 10 Open Universities in the whole 53 nation Commonwealth; by 2005, there were 13 Open Universities in India alone.” In the Caribbean, many institutions are offering distance education and there is increasing organizational interest through CARADOL (Caribbean Association of Distance and Open Learning) and JADOL (Jamaican Association of Distance and Open Learning) and others. Credit must be given to the CKLN (Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network) and the work which it has been doing to help many Caribbean institutions improve their capacity for distance learning. The Commonwealth of Learning has also played an important role through training as well as assistance with programme development with institutions such as the University College of the Caribbean in Jamaica and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic in Barbados. University of Technology has also worked with UWI and others through the CUPIDE project to do some foundation work in Open and Distance Learning.

The UWI Open Campus is the embodiment of UWI’s commitment to widening access to the underserved communities of the 15 countries and scores of islands which it serves. The potential for widening access is self evident. The Campus is attempting to balance quality with quantity by making it possible to multiply enrolment without the need for multiplying the usual physical or the usual type of human resources. Of course, there is need for greater investment in technology and technology support as well as for training in the use of technology.

There are mechanisms for quality assurance through the application of the established UWI standards but there are other new challenges such as the quality of courseware, the effective use of opportunities for creating virtual communities and providing general student support which are peculiar to a distance environment. There is also the need for the agility and timeliness in all the systems and processes which ODL requires .

Undoubtedly, as indicated earlier, there is the potential for cost reduction but there are initial challenges of set up costs, branding and promotion. Culturally, learners are still demanding the production and distribution of large quantities of printed materials, and the timely distribution of paper throughout the region is an extremely expensive venture. However, as we transition towards paperlessness, there should be efficiency gains.

Technology penetration, broadband availability and cost are also challenges which continue to be addressed from a number of vantage points. All in all, there is no doubt that the use of Open and Distance learning is a tremendous opportunity for balancing the quality and quantity dilemma.

HOW CAN QUALITY AND QUANTITY BE THEMSELVES MANAGED IN THE QUALITY/QUANTITY RELATIONSHIP?

As student numbers and student diversity increase, there are many strategies which can be employed to simultaneously improve quality. These include:

- diagnosing learning needs of those who are challenged and provision of remediation for learners, as needed;
- provision of student support services including academic, psychological and career guidance and counseling;
- increasing staff complement to maintain appropriate student staff ratios;
- provision of opportunities for smaller group interactions through small group activities including tutorials and discussion sessions;
- the use of open and distance methodologies with high quality courseware, appropriate technology and adequate and timely tutorial support and perhaps, most important, the opportunity for social networking and student interaction to overcome the challenges of physical separation;
- adjustment in the pedagogical approach to give the necessary skills not only to the students who learn in the face to face mode but also to those who learn at a distance as well as to the facilitators and e-tutors who are organizing for adult self directed learning;
- empowerment of institutions so that they can conduct their own self evaluation;
- the establishment and operationalisation and utilization of accreditation bodies which can carry out external evaluation and the promotion of quality improvement, and
- a shift towards benchmarking through the assessment and comparison of outcomes and competencies within and across countries and regions.

In addition, the management of quantity itself should include widening access which extends to:

- increasing male enrolment,
- enhancing the representation of the differently - abled,
- accommodating and providing for the needs of lifelong learners at all stages of the life cycle including the retired and those made redundant,
- catering to the late bloomers with non traditional qualifications by providing alternative points of entry and different pathways into the educational system, and
- formally accommodating workplace and community learning to enable not only access to programmes but also accelerated progress in tertiary studies.

Desirable though they may seem, a careful look at the majority of these strategies points to increasing the cost of tertiary education and brings us back to Sir John Daniel's steel triangle of quality, access and cost and the need for new approaches.

MOVING AHEAD

In the introduction, I proposed a formula

Quality/ Quantity x strategic management = success.

I have already defined quality and quantity. What remains to be explored in this equation are success and strategic management.

Success is viewed as the balancing of quantity and quality to promote the achievement of the desired outcomes of increased personal, national and regional development towards the emergence of knowledge societies. In other words, we have to ensure that the largest possible number of persons have the best possible opportunity to develop their full potential so that they can participate fully in the transformation of our small resource - limited states into productive, innovative and financially viable entities in which their citizens are healthy, happy and self- actualised. Stated differently, more Caribbean States should have the opportunity to advance up the Happiness Index and the Quality of Life Index alluded to earlier.

This is a tall order which can only be achieved by visionary approaches and strategic management.

- Philosophically in our planning and practice, we have to embrace service over selfcentredness, development over judgment, openness over closure, dynamism and growth over static achievement, quality enhancement over quality assurance and control. The circle rather than the pyramid has to be the logo. Both rewards and incentives have to be the tools employed for quality enhancement. In focusing on Quality, we have to aspire for full inclusion of stakeholders in goal setting and in the determination and application of assessment methods, evaluation measures

and processes. We also have to be adopting an increasingly global perspective and a growing outcomes and competencies focus.

- Strategically, we have to adopt a systems - perspective which attempts to mobilize the resources of the entire region, and a proactive perspective to keep ahead of the curve. For this regional approach to Quality Assurance, CANQATE and its founder, Ethly London have to be complimented, along with all the other regional leaders and organizations who have tried to promote regionalism in Education. If we look at it dispassionately, we know that our individual countries (except for Jamaica and its athletics) are much too small to compete alone on the international stage.
- Operationally, we must embrace convergence over divergence. In this regard, in its planning, the region must strive to look for opportunities to form alliances which will prevent wastage of resources and maximise comparative advantage. Within and among countries, strategies for articulation and laddering of programmes remain either untapped or underutilized. Harmonising course development, creating a common pool of courses, cooperation in assessment including examination and certification are all worthwhile goals which have been on the table for several years but which are still quite elusive.

I mentioned earlier that convergence has been taking place in mature tertiary education systems. In some states in the USA, there is even legislation to support this coordination and convergence which allows for open entry at the base into community colleges, competitive entry into associated four year colleges and universities from which high achieving and motivated students can access research universities for higher qualifications. Barbados took a controversial leap in promoting convergence when it recognized Associate degrees as a basis for the award of Barbados scholarships. Other such initiatives will not only provide leverage for convergence but will also provide incentives for quality improvement on the part of the institutions which benefit from these regulations.

Arguably, one of the most effective and efficient ways of increasing quantity without decreasing quality in the Caribbean is to adopt a regional approach and regional standards for tertiary education development and organization in the region. The demand for more effective service industries and the pull on countries to become knowledge economies demand the enrolment of increasing quantities of students, the expansion of existing institutions and growth in the number of new and diverse institutional types. Many small Caribbean countries are attempting to do this alone but in my view, the chances of success will be enhanced significantly through regional partnerships.

In closing, I return to that formula which I introduced earlier: Quality/quantity x strategic management = success.

Quality is seen as paramount and is presented as the numerator of the equation; quantity is important too but it is the denominator. As quantity is increased and it must, the quality focus has to be increased in order that greater success can be achieved. A diminished

focus on quality with increasing focus on numbers guarantees failure in terms of achieving desired outcomes. Additionally from the formula, it can be seen that there is a direct relationship between strategic management and a successful outcome.

Our challenge therefore is that as we manage strategically, we:

- adopt a shared vision of where we want to go;
- continue to stimulate and facilitate the expansion of tertiary education generally and through the use of open and distance learning;
- strive to harmonise standards across the tertiary education sector at both regional and national levels;
- seek to foster partnerships rather than competition, particularly among our indigenous tertiary institutions;
- work with our existing and emerging accreditation bodies to foster quality improvement, and
- through mutual support and recognition, help to promote and achieve convergence and integration into an affordable, quality tertiary education system which will also be able to successfully accommodate increased quantity while it produces quality graduates who will not only achieve their full potential but also become the region's most valuable resource.

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