



**Press Release: UCCI News**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **UCCI Education Graduates Break New Ground**

Eleven education graduates this week take a historic last walk down the aisle of the UCCI auditorium to a future of making a difference in the lives of generations of Caymanians to come. Five ground-breaking students are graduating with their bachelor's degree in education while six others will be the first batch to receive their teacher's aide certification.

The annual graduation ceremony takes place on Thursday, 8 July, at the Sir Vassel Johnson Hall, beginning at 6:45 pm. The invitation-only event will be broadcast live on CITN's Island 24.

Taking their place alongside some 150 participating members of the more than 200-strong 2010 class, the small pioneering group of Education graduates can be justly proud. UCCI's Education programmes are approved by the University of Miami and accredited by the largest teacher education organisation in the Caribbean, the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) of the Institute of Education of the University of the West Indies. The JBTE is charged with the oversight of all teaching programmes across the Caribbean region.

"I am elated," says Dr. Allan Young, Chair of UCCI's Faculty of Education. "It feels like giving birth to one's very first child – there's the pain of delivery, but after the child arrives, there is that euphoric feeling of having brought forth new life."

The actual introduction all began back in 2006, says Dr. Young, who has to his credit 30 years of teaching at the high school and college level, including 16 at the Atlanta campus of Devry University, along with three advanced degrees. The concept, he says, owes its genesis to the vision of UCCI's President Roy Bodden during his tenure as the then-Minister of Education, but was set in motion by a later administration, under the leadership of then-Minister of Education Alden McLaughlin, as part of the "2005 National Consensus on the Future of Education". These initiatives sought to ensure the introduction of teacher education and training in the Cayman Islands, as well as to support high quality professional development for serving teachers.

Led on the UCCI end by Dr. Young and colleagues Drs. Mark Minott and Louise Malcolm, the process started with meetings with the Ministry of Education and stakeholders. The development reached its

climax following what Dr. Young calls an “intellectual partnership” with the University of Miami and the JBTE. The University of Miami subsequently independently reviewed and accepted the syllabus.

“The University of Miami’s sanction means that our students are accepted unconditionally into that institution’s master’s programmes,” says Dr. Young.

The programme was further accredited in 2009 by the JBTE, representatives of which visit yearly to evaluate students on teaching practice.

“The overwhelming majority of our students on teaching practice receive good evaluations. Those who may have some developmental needs are given an extra five on the normal 15 weeks of teaching practice and then re-evaluated,” Dr. Young says, noting that 15 weeks is well above standard professional requirements.

Dr. Young explains that the forerunner of the bachelor’s degree programme was the successful diploma in education, a 12-month course designed on a work-release basis for persons with degrees in content areas but requiring teaching qualifications. Since the introduction of that programme, Dr. Young says, two graduates are at some stage of completing their master’s degree and one is pursuing a Ph.D.

One of the aims of the education offerings of which he is most proud, Dr. Young says, is the enabling of persons who are already employed as teacher’s aides to achieve qualifications while continuing work. He is delighted, as well, that the bachelor’s programme at UCCI serves to attract young Caymanians to an area that has long been plagued by a shortage of qualified local professionals.

Commenting on the these UCCI educational offerings last year to the *GIS Spotlight* programme, Ms Cassandra Taylor, who completed the Diploma in Education, qualifying her as a primary teacher, said that that attainment would perhaps have been unlikely for her at this time of her life were it not for the convenient way in which the programme was offered.

Speaking to the need that these programmes fill, she said: “I do not remember very many Caymanian teachers ... when I was growing up,” adding that “it is very important for young Caymanians to feel that they have Caymanian mentors.” Some of this gap was due, Ms Taylor thought, to not enough being done to encourage Caymanians to become teachers. “It is a very noble field – it may not be the highest paid, but it comes with its rewards.”

In addition to filling these obvious needs, Dr. Young is pleased, too, about the template on which all UCCI education programmes are based – the Reflective Pastoral Apprenticeship Model. “This means the aim of all our programmes is to develop and encourage students to think critically and to question their personal values, assumptions and beliefs about current teaching dynamics, while reflecting on their teaching behaviours as a whole.”

The whole area of reflective teaching is a sphere of some expertise for UCCI. Last year Dr. Minott

presented a paper on this leading-edge concept at a conference of the Trinidad and Tobago Reading Association. Dr. Minott has also appeared with regard to this concept in the bibliography of a current textbook in use at UCCI and other tertiary level education institutions.

While equipping graduates with such sound and up-to-date educational theory, policy and practice, the bachelor's degree in education also provides, Dr. Young says, opportunities to be current in the use of information technology in the classroom, progressive with regard to the latest innovations in curriculum and instruction, and forward-thinking in terms of strategies for achieving an effective learning environment. Graduates are also inducted into the intricacies of classroom measurement and evaluation.

To be accepted into the bachelor's programme, candidates must have five top-grade passes at CXC or equivalent, or four passes with one at "A" (Advanced) level. SAT scores at specified higher levels are also accepted. Mature students (over 30 years of age), especially those working in the field of teaching, are accepted on passing the college entrance exam at specified higher levels.

And what's ahead for this burgeoning sector of UCCI's faculties? The next goal, says Dr. Young, is to offer a collaborative master's degree with the University of Miami (UM) -- the Master of Science in Education (M.S. Ed.) Programme in Advanced professional Studies, which he anticipates will start shortly.

This advanced degree programme, meeting another of the goals for educational development in the Cayman Islands -- this time for high-quality continuing education for existing professionals -- will be taught at the UCCI campus by UM faculty, though many courses will be co-taught with UCCI Education faculty.

One can expect that young teacher Cassandra Taylor has her sights on this programme as a means of expanding her educational horizons, given the course's particular design for busy teachers, meeting as it does twice monthly on weekends.

However, while this programme is specifically designed for existing or aspiring primary and secondary school teachers such as Ms Taylor, it may also be suited to persons who work locally in closely aligned educational and/or social service positions. In addition to its wide variety of education topics, it will also address the areas of leadership, management and administration.

As a result, students will learn not only how to become more effective classroom teachers but will also be trained as effective leaders in the field of education among others. In addition, all coursework, course materials, and projects will place an emphasis on the multi-cultural context of life in the Cayman Islands, a possible draw for persons from a range of fields.

A plus for entrants to this programme is that admission and good standing in the M.S. Ed. programme will afford local students all the opportunities of University of Miami students, including access to all UM

facilities and resources.

Persons attending this week's graduation ceremony in honour of education and other graduates are reminded that they must show invitations at the door, and so they should arrive well in advance of the 6:45 pm start time.

**\*\*END OF RELEASE\*\***

The University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI) is an institution of higher learning that contributes to Caymanian society by advancing knowledge and developing creative graduates through our cultural, social, economic and environmental activities. UCCI offers a number of certificate programmes, associate and degree courses as well as graduate programmes and professional trainings. Visit [www.ucci.edu.ky](http://www.ucci.edu.ky) to learn more.