

Focus on *quality*



THE UNIVERSITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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*'QUALITY IS NOT SOMETHING WE DO,
IT'S HOW WE DO EVERYTHING'*

Presenting UTT's President - Professor Dyer Narinesingh

On Monday 10th June 2013 Professor Dyer Narinesingh assumed the position of President of The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT). Professor Narinesingh has had a distinguished career as an academic, having lectured at the University of the West Indies as a Professor of Chemistry for thirty (30) years. There he also served in many administrative capacities including Head, Department of Chemistry, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, Chairman of the Committee of Deans and Chairman of the Campus Committee on Graduate Studies and Research.

Professor Narinesingh's sterling contribution in the field of graduate studies research has led to the publication of seventy-two (72) scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings. He has also supervised a number of M.Phil and Ph.D students. He is the current Chairman of CARISCIENCE.

As President, Professor Narinesingh believes that UTT is "destined to play a catalytic role in the socio-economic transformation of [the Trinidad and Tobago] society". His dogged determination, moral fortitude and transformational leadership are qualities which are pivotal to creating an enabling environment that would make this vision a reality.



Professor Dyer Narinesingh

Commitment to continuously improving quality, always seeking better ways of doing things, is the hallmark of an institution that is striving for excellence. Professor Narinesingh's personal belief is that we need always to concentrate our efforts on what we can do collectively for the benefit of the institution and ultimately the country. Quality is the result of shared understanding, collective effort and teamwork. Having served as a member of the board of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT), Professor Narinesingh also brings to UTT a passion for excellence and an in-depth understanding of the

need for a strong, robust quality assurance system in today's rapidly changing higher education environment.

Leading one of the youngest universities in the Caribbean region is indeed a challenge. In the absence of a well-established tradition and reputation earned over decades, UTT has had to define its space and establish its presence as the national university of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The achievement of becoming the first university in the English-speaking Caribbean

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Quality Management System (QMS) @ Work

WHAT IS THE QMS?

A Quality Management System (QMS) is a critical multidimensional model that encompasses all the systems and controls necessary for an organisation to conduct its business and fulfil its mission and purpose. There are several definitions recorded for the QMS. One such definition is that the QMS is:

“A set of co-ordinated activities to direct and control an organisation in order to continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its performance.”¹

The QMS is therefore highly customer-focused and promotes the continuous improvement of the activities carried out in an organisation. All QMS models generally depict how organisations are structured and function, and include the linkages between structure and functions and the interconnectivity between functional areas. The way that an organisation operates directs how the QMS will be designed, developed and implemented.

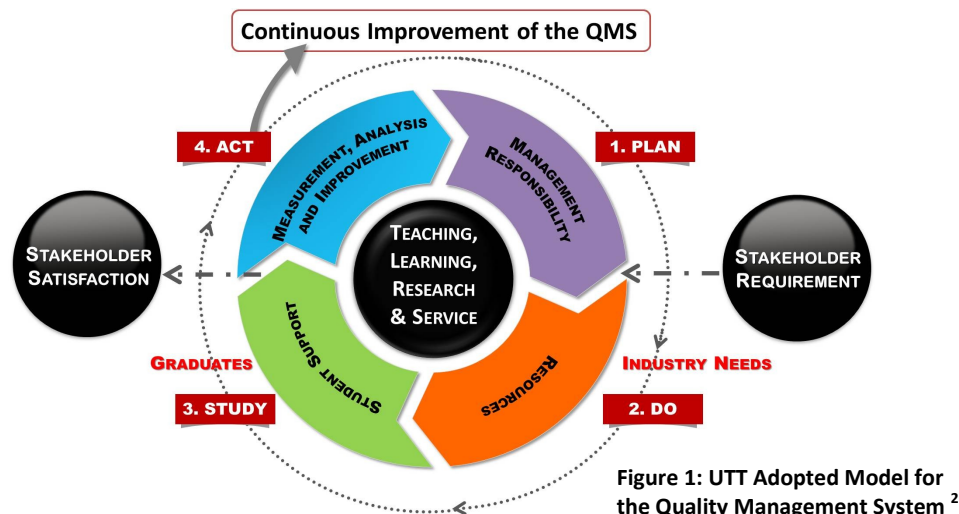
At UTT, the QMS is represented by several sub-level systems that:

- plan for quality
- demonstrate management’s commitment to quality
- define and set control parameters for documents and records
- measure success
- monitor, evaluate and review for effectiveness
- promote continuous improvement of processes and activities

Some benefits of an effective QMS include:

- satisfied stakeholders
- efficient organisational processes and practices
- increased staff morale
- elimination of unnecessary steps
- cost effectiveness
- proactive employees

COMPONENTS OF THE QMS



¹From Quality to Excellence”, Department of Trade and Industry, United Kingdom, 1998, www.dti.gov.uk/quality/qms
² ISO 9000:2008 Quality Management Systems-Requirements

QMS @ Work is a series of quality assurance articles intended to inform and demonstrate to the university community the key components necessary to achieve and sustain effective and efficient organisational performance.

In this article, a broad overview of the Quality Management System (QMS) at The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) is presented.

Presenting UTT’s President Professor Dyer Narinesingh

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.... to be accredited by a national accreditation body (17th December 2010) is a distinction that UTT holds today. In the field of engineering, UTT’s programmes are accredited by the Energy Institute (EI), Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE), and Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST) of the United Kingdom.

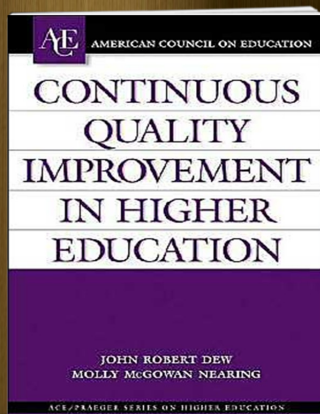
Professor Narinesingh believes that UTT’s quality mantra ‘Quality is not something we do, it’s how we do everything is a goal that we can, and will achieve’. “This we can only achieve by working together, always giving of the best that we have to offer, in the service of our students, of our society, and of all of humanity”.

**“ Give them quality.
That’s the best kind of advertising.”**

Milton Hershey (1857 - 1945)

(Continued on page 5)

RECOMMENDED READING



Title: Continuous Quality Improvement in Higher Education

Author/s: John R. Dew, Molly McGowan Nearing

Publication Date: 2004

Continuous improvement is so important for leaders in higher education today because they find it now being embedded in the re-accreditation process for many accrediting associations. This book provides a historical perspective on Continuous Quality Improvement in pioneering institutions.

Additionally, it offers insights on how to obtain stakeholder feedback through surveys and focus groups. Dew and Nearing address the issue of strategic planning from a CI perspective and include concepts to improve academic programmes. They also fulfil their goal of bringing structure to the chaotic issue of measurement and feedback in the higher education setting.

Source:

http://www.amazon.com/Continuous-Quality-Improvement-Education-Praeger/dp/product-description/B000GINIRI/ref=dp_proddesc_0



BRAIN GAMES

CRYPTOGRAM

Cryptograms are encoded sayings or quotations where each letter has been substituted for another. Can you decode this cryptogram? (Hints provided below.)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
N																	Z	B							

' A S S
C G N S U I L U B K A I B A D M I F U K P
' S R
H M O A U I B F A H H M O A M Q M Z L I F U K P

(Answer on Page 6)

SUDOKU

Sudoku is easy to play and the rules are simple.

Fill in the blanks so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contain one instance of each of the numbers 1 through 9.

	1		4		2		5	
5								6
			3		1			
7		5				4		8
2		8				5		9
			9		6			
6								2
	7		1		3		4	

THE QUALITY PROFESSIONALS FORUM

The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) in demonstrating its commitment to continuous quality improvement has taken the opportunity to play a lead role in creating a network of quality assurance professionals in the tertiary education sector.

The Quality Professionals Forum (QPF) allows members to:

- * Participate in online discussions on quality assurance and accreditation issues
- * Access resources (text, video etc.) posted by the administrator and other site users
- * Interact with other quality assurance professionals and educators within the tertiary education sector
- * Enjoy access to a wealth of information on best practice at institutions that are leaders in higher education

To join the Quality Professionals Forum (QPF) kindly send an email to gpf@utt.edu.tt.

<http://www.utt.edu.tt/gpf>



Stakeholder Feedback: Improving the UTT Experience

As the national university of Trinidad and Tobago, it is vital that The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) continuously improve its programmes and support services to meet the rapidly changing needs and expectations of our stakeholders. Students and alumni are undoubtedly very important stakeholders of the university. Students, their families and sponsors invest substantial resources for an education experience which will impact their lives long after they graduate.

During their programme of study, students experience the strengths and weaknesses of the university's systems and processes directly. Their future career success is often related to the achievement of intended and unintended learning outcomes during their programme of study. **Engaging our students to obtain feedback on their experiences and the extent to which the university meets their needs and expectations, allows UTT to measure our institutional effectiveness. Through their feedback, students and alumni bring their perspective to the planning agenda and provide valuable insight into the conditions, experiences, and changing needs of those in higher education.**



As part of our annual institutional research agenda, UTT collects data at various stages of the student lifecycle. At the start of each academic year, a New Student Survey (NSS) is administered to new undergraduate students to obtain information intended to improve instructional effectiveness and support services. Returning students are also provided with an opportunity to rate UTT's performance in the annual Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS). This survey also provides good assessment data on the effectiveness of units directly involved in the provision of support services for students. Feedback from alumni is obtained through the Graduate Exit Survey (GES) and a Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) conducted biennially. The input of students is equally important to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, specifically in their assessment of the quality of academic instruction they receive. In this regard, the university also administers a Student Evaluation of Teaching (SEOT) survey for all courses at the end of each semester. This forms part of faculty evaluation and assists administrators in planning and prioritising faculty training and professional development opportunities. Collectively, these initiatives bring into greater focus the importance of institutional research data to improve the learning experience of current and future students.

Although the university now systematically collects feedback from students, this can only be useful if it translates into actionable strategies for improvement which are implemented. **Implementing change is a university-wide undertaking that requires planning and cooperation from all units that work to provide a quality educational product to students. Students must experience real change if they are to continue partnering with us in a system of shared governance.** If the university solicits student feedback but fails to act, then their trust in UTT will be eroded. As a young university our profile will be enhanced if we can build a reputation for student centredness and responsiveness through messages carried by our students and alumni.

Steps in The Institutional Research Process



Quality Management System (QMS) at Work

(Continued from page 2)

The QMS is composed of processes that are categorised as core and support processes. A process is generally a series of steps that translates inputs (stakeholder requirements) into outputs (stakeholder satisfaction). **For educational institutions such as UTT, the core processes revolve around all activities concerned with teaching and learning (see Figure 1). These core activities primarily involve the development and delivery of programmes, recruitment, registration and retention of students, assessment of student learning outcomes, and support for students' learning experiences. The support processes are comprised mainly of the functional areas such as, human resources, finance, information technology, facilities, health, safety and security.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCESS

One of the fundamental requirements of a functioning QMS in any organisation is being able to identify all the processes (and sub-processes) necessary for an organisation to carry out its mandate. The activities accomplished by each employee, regardless of the office held, are all aligned to a process or processes. This is no different for UTT and the question "How well do you know your process?" is therefore a critical indicator that tests how clearly employees understand what they do and how their job functions impact the overall organisation's performance.

Documenting. Documenting processes is therefore key to understanding the 'who', 'why', 'how', 'when', 'where' of all operations executed in the workplace. At UTT processes are detailed in a wide range of documents, such as, policies, regulations, procedures, manuals, handbooks, guides, and forms. While documenting organisational practices is seen as important for effective performance, implementing controls that ensure that the correct versions of documents are always in circulation is equally important to the QMS. This system for document control applies to the creation, identification, revision, approval, distribution, and methodology for tracking the movement of documents across the institution and its campuses. Document control also allows for greater standardisation of processes.

Standardisation. Standardising how organisations conduct their core and support processes should not be confused with restricting the growth of the institution and stifling innovation and creativity. Standardisation is important to UTT in that it assures the quality of all the processes that impact the QMS, such as the quality of the programme offerings, quality of students, quality of faculty and staff, support to students, and allocation of appropriate and 'just in time' resources. Standardisation thus allows UTT to establish that solid foundation on which key organisational functions can be improved while stimulating innovative ideas and actions.

Continuous Improvement. The QMS is not complete without the implementation of a quality improvement cycle. Institutions should not become complacent with their practices and performance. Rapid changes in the way that institutions operate are constantly occurring in the global arena chiefly as a result of emerging knowledge, technologies and markets. These changes tend to drive the intense competition across institutions at the local, regional and international levels. Institutionalising a continuous improvement model would thus have a positive effect on the enhancement of core and support processes of the QMS while strengthening the capacity of UTT to realise its vision as an entrepreneurial university.

Our next article on **QMS @ Work** will feature the university's continuous quality improvement cycle.

Some general questions that faculty and staff can use to gauge their process proficiency are:

- ✓ Do you know the processes to which your activities are aligned?
- ✓ Do you know how your processes fit into the 'larger' organisational picture?
- ✓ Can you identify the major stakeholders and their expectations for your processes?
- ✓ How are your processes connected to the primary stakeholders (students)?
- ✓ How often are your processes reviewed and measured for effectiveness?
- ✓ Is the continuous improvement cycle applied to your processes?

“It's the little things you do that make the big things happen.” - Mike Dooley

Tableau Implementation Case Study: The SRS Database Consolidation Exercise

BACKGROUND

In 2003, The Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology (TTIT) procured a Student Record System (SRS) to manage its student data. In 2004, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago established The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) which integrated TTIT and other existing institutions. SRS was used to manage student information for all the institutions incorporated into UTT. As a result of network connectivity issues between the existing institutions, the decision was taken to have SRS run separately as a stand-alone system on each of the six (6) campuses.

THE CHALLENGE

The SRS as a stand-alone system on six (6) individual campuses created several challenges for UTT. Some major challenges included fragmented student records, duplicated processes when collating student data, redundant data in the six (6) databases with scheduling and backup conflicts in the maintenance of these databases. These challenges significantly impacted UTT's reporting capabilities and its ability to effectively and efficiently manage the administration of its support operations. As these challenges reached critical mass, the need for a consolidation of these databases was identified.

THE PROJECT

The project's main objective was to merge six (6) existing databases into one data repository for staff use using the Tableau software application.

THE SOLUTION

A SRS Consolidation Team, chaired by Troy Horsford, Manager, Knowledge and Compliance Systems - QA&IE, was formed to undertake this exercise. The team comprised thirteen (13) members from the following functional areas: Office of the Registrar, Information and Technology Services and Academic programmes. The duration of the project was approximately six (6) months.

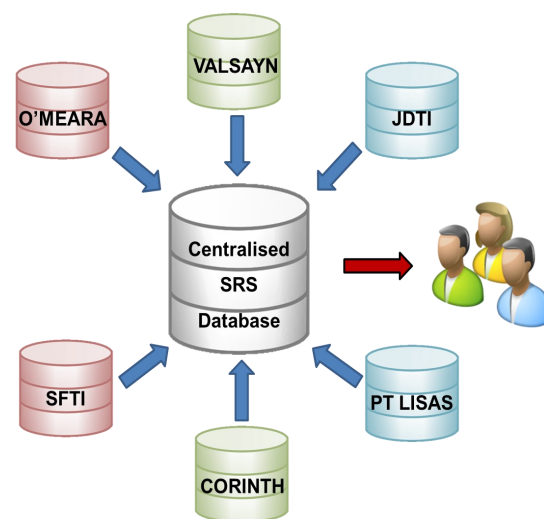
The team used Tableau to simultaneously extract data from all of the SRS stand-alone databases. The data were then presented in a single dashboard view for the identification of anomalies and inconsistencies within the data. Working on one common table within each of the six (6) databases at a time, the team was able to quickly identify the errors and inconsistencies in the data.

Each team member accessed the Tableau Server and made changes to the databases which were instantaneously reflected in Tableau. Once the changes were made to the table and documented, the corrected table was then uploaded into the new centralised SRS. Once all tables were fully merged and uploaded into the new integrated SRS database, all database users were then linked to the system.

Without the use of Tableau, the consolidation exercise would have been virtually impossible and may have extended the project schedule far beyond the six-month time frame. Tableau's collaborative features such as dashboards and discussion boards allowed team interaction on various aspects of the project. Team members were also able to access Tableau from any of UTT's campuses. This contributed to increased productivity and expedited the completion of the project.

THE BENEFITS

Staff members were able to access and benefit from the new centralised database system. These benefits included the elimination of data redundancies and faster reporting on students grades and other statistical information. In addition, the maintenance of one data source greatly enhanced efficiency and data integrity. The consolidated database will be integrated into the new Student Information System (SIS).



The SRS Database Consolidation

Tips on How to Google

Below are some useful search commands and techniques when using the Google Search Box.

Specific Phrases	Use of quotation marks in a Google search tells Google to look for the specific phrase contained within the quotation marks. For example, let's search "The University of Trinidad and Tobago " QMS
Exclude Words	Put a minus sign (" - ") in front of words you want to avoid. This Google command can help for words with multiple meanings. For example, searching bat -baseball will help me to return results on the nocturnal animal and not on a piece of baseball equipment.
Include Synonyms or Similar Words	Often, several different word choices may return your desired results from a search. Searching with the syntax ~food ~facts indicates that you want to include in your search results synonyms of the words 'food' and 'facts' . For example, your results may contain the word 'nutrition' instead of 'food', as they are synonyms.
Weather	Use the Google weather command to find the weather forecast for a particular city. For example, weather: Port of Spain
Phonebook	The phonebook syntax will look up residential phone numbers corresponding to the name and the specified area. For example, try performing the search phonebook: Mike, Smith, New York . Google recommends using the syntax structure: first name, last name, area (where area is either the city, state, area code, or zip code). Notice that the first and last name are separated by a comma, although leaving one out usually works too.
Word Definitions	Need to find a definition fast ? Use the Google search operator 'define:' to return a list of definitions that Google finds on the web. Once again, the list of definitions is displayed directly to the page that follows your search. For example, let's try the search command define: diabetes
Specific Filetypes	This command is used to restrict your web search to specific file types. For example, form 1040 filetype:pdf will look for the phrase 'form 1040' in only pdf files. For more help on searching a specific file type, go to the filetype search FAQ page.
Calculator	Not enough light to power your old solar calculator? Google search commands have got you covered. Just enter your mathematical computation into the search box. Available arithmetic operators include + - * / for basic computations. Use the command '% of' to discover, for example, 45% of 60 . More examples of operations include: 2^16 , sqrt(-4) , half a cup in teaspoons
Currency Conversion	Need to figure out how much your two bucks will get you in Canada or perhaps Germany. Google currency conversion is fairly intuitive and easy to use. Here are some example queries. 3.5 USD in TTD currency of Brazil in Malaysian money 5 British pounds in South Korean money 2.2 USD per gallon in INR per litre

Adapted from <http://www.searchengineknowledge.com/searchtools/searchcommands.php>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



A listing of university-wide, national, regional and international higher education events.

THE 2ND DUBAI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, 19 - 20 JANUARY, 2014

Sustaining success in the rapidly changing arena of Higher Education is a global challenge. Bringing creativity and innovation to the way we educate today is of the utmost importance. The aim of this international conference, hosted by the Michigan State University (MSU) in Dubai, is to provide for all those closely connected with Higher Education, a forum for sharing experience and expertise in creating innovative and successful learning, teaching, research and outreach environments fit for Higher Education in the 21st century.

The conference theme is *“Sustaining Success Through Innovation”*.

CONFERENCE TRACKS :

- *Providing excellence through innovation*
- *Ensuring quality in learning and teaching*
- *Demonstrating excellence in research and outreach*

For more information, please visit the MSU’s website at
<http://dubai.isp.msu.edu/conference/>

Look out for our
Special Issue
celebrating
UTT’s 10th anniversary
2004 - 2014



ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

Focus on Quality is published for the staff and stakeholders of The University of Trinidad and Tobago and is a semi-annual publication of the Office of Quality Assurance & Institutional Effectiveness (QA&IE).

QA&IE is charged with primary responsibility for the design, development and implementation of a university-wide system for quality assurance and accreditation and an integrated approach to institutional research that is linked to strategic planning and evidence-based decision-making.

We welcome your contributions and comments. Please send them to The Editor at utt.quality@utt.edu.tt.

Tel: 1 (868) 642-8888 Ext 33135. The deadline for submissions for the next edition is **February 28th, 2014**.

CREDITS

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NEWSLETTER ONLINE

www.u.tt/qaie

