

Portraits of Excellence: The USC Annual Student Scholarship Awards and Gala 2025.

The University of the Southern Caribbean (USC) recognizes and accepts its responsibility to seek opportunities to effect transformation in the lives of all its students. This responsibility is clearly reflected in the institution's mission— *“To transform ordinary people into extraordinary servants of God to humanity through a holistic tertiary educational experience.”*

The University of the Southern Caribbean has been hosting the ***Portraits of Excellence Scholarship*** program since 2006. This initiative combines the intellectual, social, physical and spiritual aspects of learning and thereby provides an avenue for both the participants, and the wider student population to be exposed to transforming life experiences that will prove beneficial to their holistic growth, and personal and professional development.

Objectives of Portraits of Excellence

1. To encourage excellence in academia with emphasis on scholarly research and communication skills.

Participants will work along with faculty advisors to produce scholarly research projects based on their academic disciplines. The issues being researched will form the basis of their individual presentations. Opportunities for presenting and publishing their research findings will be made available through the USC Department of Research.

2. To provide an avenue for personal and professional growth for students via exposure to a range of professional training environments.
3. To raise the awareness and appreciation of the diverse cultures represented at USC via well-crafted, creative presentations by students from the various territorial clubs that are represented on the USC campus.
4. To instill a spirit of community service and Christian love for humanity through involvement in community or nationwide-based projects.
5. To provide an alternative means of sourcing tuition funding for students to achieve their academic goals.

6. To create and maintain beneficial partnerships with private and public sector clients, and provide networking opportunities for USC and its publics
7. To build a sense of community among the student population and engender teamwork.

After having a hiatus from 2013, the USC has once again resumed hosting this scholarship pageant for its students.

Selection Criteria

1. The screening committee will conduct individual interviews with each applicant to ascertain their readiness, appropriateness and willingness to serve as ambassadors for USC. The following criteria will guide the selection process:
 - a. *Good Citizenship (to be determined by the Student Services Council)*
 - b. *Undergraduate students who are not in their first nor final year, with a GPA 3.0 or above*
 - c. *Willingness to be an Ambassador for USC, and embrace the Ideals of the USCian Man & Woman*
 - d. *Willingness and ability to participate in all preparatory activities leading up to the final event.*
 - e. *Active involvement in student life on Campus.*
2. A minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 persons would be required for the conduct of the event.
3. Only 1 male and 1 female representative from each territory will be selected.
4. Students must have a support base of at least 15 individuals if a territorial club does not exist for their territory.

ASSESSMENT SEGMENTS	PERCENTAGE WEIGHTING
Written Research Project	30%
Oral Presentation of the Research Findings	10%
The Talent/Skill Segment	15%

Impromptu Question	5%
Academic and Personal Development Sessions	10%
Community Development Project	15%
Cultural Display	15%
TOTAL	100%

Theme

The theme for the 2024/2025 Portraits of Excellence program is **“Entrepreneurial Innovations: An Imperative for Sustainability in the Caribbean”**

The emphasis is on the United Nations sustainable development **Goals #8 and #9 - which are Decent Work & Economic Growth and Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure.**

Portraits of Excellence spans a period of 8 months, comprising a series of smaller sessions that would be assessed and recorded. Some of these events include:

- Professional development workshops for the participants in areas such as speech dynamics, research methods, interpersonal relations, dining etiquette, resume writing and interviewing skills, health and hygiene, emotional intelligence, and wardrobe selection. These sessions are done by professionals in the various fields who give of their time for free.
- Community project: students are required to work along with their clubs and engage in a minimum of 20 hours community service; working on a particular project in sync with the theme for the scholarship pageant.

Gala Event

The program will culminate on **March 16, 2025 under the distinguished patronage of Mrs. Sharon Clark-Rowley** at the University's Auditorium, with the delegates showcasing their talent pieces, cultural wear, and responding to impromptu questions. On the night of the Gala event, scores from both gala and pre-gala activities will be tabulated. The male and female delegate with the most outstanding scores will be the recipients of the scholarship awards and the coveted title: Mr. & Ms. USC respectively. Mr. & Ms. USC will serve as ambassadors for a period of (1) year, and will be selected based on their highest aggregate score in specific assessment categories. A panel of judges will adjudicate over the various events.

Scholarship Prizes

The Prizes for the Portraits of Excellence Scholarship Pageant are as follows:

- **Scholarship Prizes:**

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| - Mr. & Ms. USC prizes each at - full tuition for 1 year | \$60,000. (2 delegates) |
| - First Runners Up (M/F) each at - 50% tuition for 1 year | \$30,000. (2 delegates) |
| - All other delegates each at - 25% tuition for 1 year | \$30,000. (4 delegates) |

- **Other prizes**

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| - Research Award | \$10,000 |
| - Community Project | \$5,000 (for the cultural club) |
| - Best Talent Award: male and female @ \$3,000 | \$6,000 |
| - Congeniality Award | \$1,000 |
| - Best cultural Wear: male and female @\$1500 | \$3000 |
| - The People's Choice Award | \$1000 |
| - Best Research Presentation Award | \$1000 |

These prizes are usually donated from corporate partners, alumni, and private citizens.

2024 Portraits of Excellence Delegates

Please visit [here](https://usc.edu.tt/poe) to view the delegates' photos and profiles (usc.edu.tt/poe).

- Ms. Ruqayya Abdul-Haqq representing the Trinidad and Tobago club.
- Mr. John Wright represented the Trinidad and Tobago club.
- Ms. Felesha Jack representing the Dominica club.
- Ms. Ahjea Jackson representing St. Vincent and Grenada clubs (Vinada).
- Mr. Hansel Thomas representing St. Vincent and Grenada clubs (Vinada).
- Ms. Alicia Lewis representing the Antigua club.
- Mr. Asahel Joseph representing the Antigua club.
- Mr. Marques Bruce representing the Extension campuses.

Delegates who are selected as Mr. and Ms. USC will serve as role models to the general student body and will have the privilege to represent the University at various public and private fora. As spokespersons and advocates, the USC Ambassadors will have the opportunity to attend **at least 5** official events/activities to address diverse audiences, increase awareness and engage in promotions for the institution. These events will include but are not limited to: 1 radio interview opportunity, 1 university speaking appointment, 1 church speaking appointment, 1 secondary school speaking appointment and one regional promotional event (regional college fair). These ambassadors will also be expected to be fully engaged in student life on campus and must lead out in the execution of a chosen project that would be beneficial to the university community.

NB: Appointments would be arranged at least 2 weeks in advance so that the delegates' study program would not be adversely affected.

Portraits of Excellence Webpage

usc.edu.tt/poe

