



semester 1 2021/2022 | Vol. 1

GOING THE DISTANCE

The School of Distance Education eNewsletter

**WELCOME
DR. COLWICK WILSON
THRIVING
IN THE NEW NORMAL**

**USC EXTENSION
CAMPUSES
SERVING THE
CARIBBEAN**

**YOUR
MENTAL
HEALTH
WHILE WORKING
REMOTELY**

**LET'S TALK
REMAINING
ACCOUNTABLE
WHILE DISTANT**



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STILL A SHINING LIGHT

ANDREA S. CATO

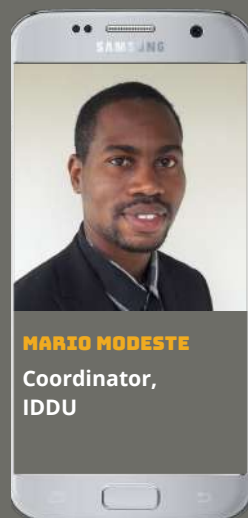
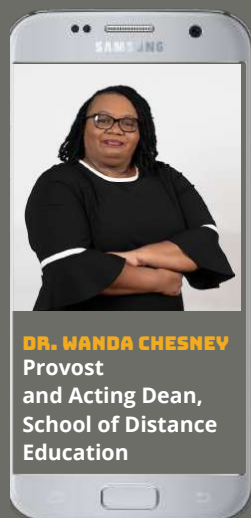
Enthralled by the confident young man in the suit who looked like a pastor, the congregation seated under the open-air corrugated iron shed we fondly called church, was in awe! He spoke of the godly school he attended where ordinary men and women were molded into true servants of God, then sent into the *world* as Jesus sent His disciples. He said that students could work to put themselves through school. I was sold.

The young ministerial student had come to the small southern town of Point Fortin, Trinidad, to sell books, so he could pay his fees for the next quarter, but when he left Hollywood Church, we had more than books. We had the knowledge of a school that belonged to our church; to all of us, where we should go to be equipped for Christian service.

The University of the Southern Caribbean (USC) is that school. The name and accreditation status have changed but the mission remains. Through a plethora of challenges, including the most recent COVID-19 adjustments, which saw the School of Distance Education and the wider university rise to the challenge, we carry on. We aim to thrive; even in the midst of the 'new normal'. We know that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us - Phillipians 4:13.

The School of Distance Education (SDE) eNewsletter is intended to be a medium to share the work of the SDE with our immediate university family and other stakeholder-friends, while engaging our readership in relevant conversation about the needs of faculty, staff and students as seen in this issue's article on '*Mental Health and Teaching Remotely*'.

The School of Distance Education dedicates this issue of 'Going the Distance' to our readers; those who support Adventist Christian education with their offerings, prayers and the sweat of their brows; and who are now preparing the next generation of USCian's who will walk through our doors - virtually or physically. This is for you reader. Know that our mission is not forgotten. Stay with us as we continue to go beyond excellence, preparing the USC man and woman for Christian service, through an institution that is still a light to the Caribbean and beyond.





WELCOME

Dr. Colwick Wilson

President, University of the Southern Caribbean

The School of Distance Education welcome's our new president with open arms.

Dr. Wilson is personable and approachable with a smile that says 'hello'. He is focused on enhancing processes and facilitating outcomes for the good of every USC employee and other stakeholders.

May God lead the man whom He has appointed.

The School of Distance Education asked the president the following question:

In the context of the School of Distance Education, can you comment on your transition to USC and the direction in which the University is heading?

The response:

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed some challenges to higher education institutions in many new and unexpected ways. In this regard, my transition to the University of the Southern Caribbean was far from the typical presidential transition.

Like most universities, USC has had to take radical measures and make major efforts, particularly in relation to digitally enhanced learning and teaching. With the sudden and necessary shift away from classroom to the adoption of online learning, the University will continue to make the necessary adjustments to ensure the quality of the USC product is maintained and delivered in a safe environment.

I intend to channel the opportunities for the University to engage even more with society, provide support to our public and private partnerships, including governments, through research and innovation and to help prepare the USCian man and woman for a more resilient society - during and post-pandemic.





THRIVING IN THE NEW NORMAL

The Lord promises never to leave or forsake us. In the face of the 'new normal' we can still thrive because of this promise.

The challenges we continue to face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have separated us physically, threatened our wellbeing and even put some loved ones to rest, yet here we are.

In these especially trying times, it is our duty to thrive. It is our duty to honour God by serving others. The fact that God has chosen us to live another day indicates that there is work for us to do. He is not done with you. He is not done with me. The University of the Southern Caribbean was born to be a light to the region and the world. That light must keep shining, because there are generations to come who will need to see it.

Current students need to know that they are not alone. Teaching an online class does not mean posting information then going on vacation. Students need to know how and when they can reach their lecturers. It helps if course outlines are updated and course spaces on Moodle are appropriately populated. Let us continue to honour the commitment we made at the beginning of the semester.

Continuing to serve does not deny our challenges or negate our suffering throughout this pandemic, but together we can continue to fight and even thrive in this new normal and beyond.

The School of Distance Education team is here to support you.

Take courage, knowing that 'this too shall pass'.

DR. WANDA CHESNEY

**Provost, and Acting Dean,
School of Distance Education**



- Relevant and accurate course information, including course outlines, dates and resources
- Actively fostering a community of enquiry among learners
- Instructor bio with photo, office hours, contact information and class link
- Integration of faith and learning in the course space

'This section presents a sample of lecturers who are offering the quality of service USC aspires to provide for its students. This is not an exhaustive list.'



RODNEY RAJKUMAR
DIRECTOR, IET

READY FOR THE NEW SEMESTER?

As you face another semester, a number of questions may be going through your mind. Can I really teach students remotely? Will this be too much work? Will my students be too bored to engage in class? How do I give challenging assessments which reflect the true ability of students while simultaneously meeting accreditation standards?

I would like to assure you that these questions are all natural. Fortunately, the Institute of Educational Technology has already thought of ways to assist.

Every semester, training in the following areas are offered:

- **E-learning Fundamentals**

This facilitates basic understanding of USC's learning management system (USC Elearn). This also includes ways to integrate Zoom into your virtual course space.

- **Teaching Strategies for Video conferencing**
During this session you will learn about various exciting ways you can increase student engagement when you teach on Zoom. Do the names Kahoot, Padlet or Mentimeter sound familiar?
- **Assessment Strategies for Remote, Blended and Online Learning**
This session will allow you to explore a number of ways in which you can assess student learning. Most exciting of all, we touch on '**authentic**' **assessments**. These are assessments which resemble real-world experiences and make classroom learning relevant to the needs of society.

Even better, we try to make things more accessible by placing **recordings** of these sessions in our online **Center for Faculty Excellence**. There you can access a year-long schedule of training and even interact with other faculty members through our faculty "**Google Group**" feature.

Do you know it gets even better? We also provide training for all our new undergraduate and graduate students through our **Undergraduate and Graduate Foundations to Online Learning courses** so that technological challenges are minimized in your classes. And just remember...should you need assistance, we are an email, phone call or Zoom meeting away!

USC EXTENSION CAMPUSES

Serving the Caribbean



**CATHERINE
INGLIS-LEON**
**COORDINATOR,
ST. LUCIA CAMPUS**



**KENNITHA
ALEXANDER**
**ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT,
ST. LUCIA CAMPUS**

ST. LUCIA CAMPUS started the school year with students from as far as El Salvador and Nigeria, enrolled in fourteen programmes, some of whom wish to avoid Trinidad's vaccination mandate.

Seventh Day Adventist brethren and friends have assisted some students who would not otherwise have been able to continue their studies. Others were compelled to suspend their studies.

Current students are excited about school and are busy preparing for chapel later this month, when the focus will be on 'How to be A Missionary in a COVID-19 World?'

Our students are also preparing promotional skits which will showcase the work they are doing at USC.

Ten students will graduate during the next graduation exercise. Three St. Lucia students will have completed their programmes by the end of this semester, while seven others will complete by the end of second semester 2021/2022.



**SHERNELLE
FULLERTON**
**COORDINATOR,
BARBADOS CAMPUS**



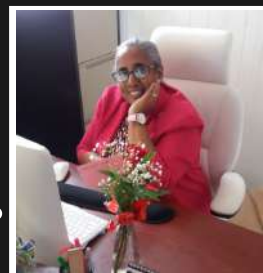
SASHA BROME
**ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT
BARBADOS CAMPUS**

In September 2021, **BARBADOS CAMPUS** hosted its '*I Shall Not be Moved*' chapel service. Students were able to build confidence and develop leadership as well as public speaking skills as they planned and executed this programme. Indeed, we were all encouraged to stand firm in our faith in God even though challenges attack us from every angle.

In the coming weeks, the students will launch an online health and wellness interactive programme. Stay tuned!

We recently launched our I-Connect Ministries; I-Provide, I-Praise and I-Pray, through which our students will minister to their peers and the wider public. In October 2021, our I-Pray team will host an early morning prayer service sponsored by the Barbados Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Conference. The I-Provide team organized a blood drive for the week of mid-semester break. Students and community members were encouraged to give blood and save a life!

Continue to pray for God's leading at the Barbados Campus. God has a great work for His children to do; to impact the church, the community and the region.



SUSANNA GORE
**COORDINATOR,
ANTIGUA CAMPUS**

ANTIGUA CAMPUS commenced its offering of tertiary education in 2007. Since then, our student population and offerings have continued to grow.

With the help of God, at this campus we seek to transform ordinary people into extraordinary servants of God to humanity.

USC Antigua welcomes you to education for life.

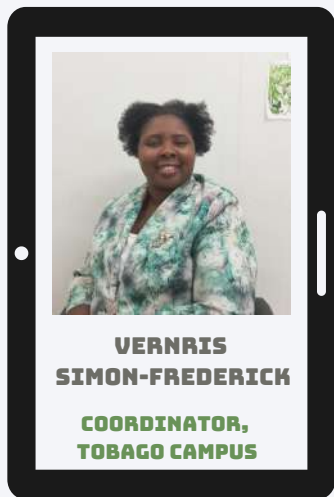
Several programmes are available:

- Bachelors in Social Work
- Bachelors in Education
- Bachelors in Special Education
- Bachelors in Consumer Science

Bachelors in Nutrition and Dietetics

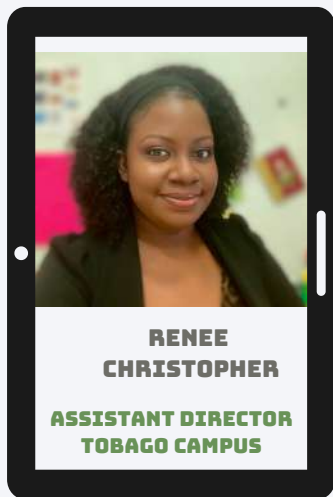
We look forward to supporting our students on their exciting and rewarding academic journey.

Come join us and we will help make your dreams a reality!



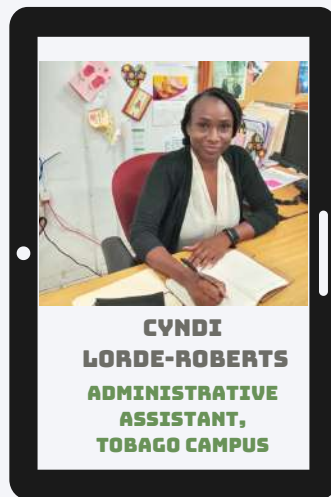
**VERNRIS
SIMON-FREDERICK**

**COORDINATOR,
TOBAGO CAMPUS**



**RENEE
CHRISTOPHER**

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
TOBAGO CAMPUS**



**CYNDI
LORDE-ROBERTS**

**ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT,
TOBAGO CAMPUS**

The **TOBAGO EXTENSION CAMPUS** is the place where *minds come alive and excellence blossoms!*

Established in September 2005, we were the first of the USC Extension Campuses to be established.

Tobago Campus allows Tobagonians to complete Bachelor's degrees, as well as the Postgraduate Diploma in Education,

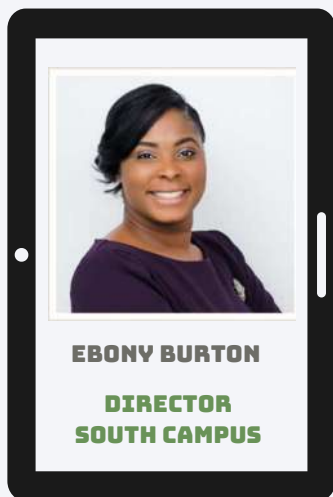
and the Master's degree in Counselling Psychology without having to move to Trinidad.

In the current semester, our **active enrollment is 146 students, 25 of whom are new.**

We reach out to our students individually and in small groups to ensure they are coping during these difficult times.

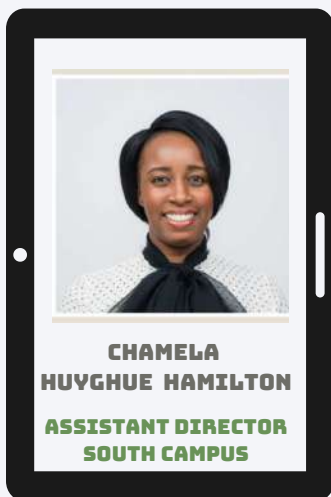
We encourage our students to participate in the various activities of the university. We are particularly proud of the students who were involved in the Chapel Service hosted by our Campus on Monday 5 October, entitled '*Looking to Jesus!*'

As we go into the second half of the semester, we do so excitedly, knowing that our steps are ordered by God; the author and finisher of our faith! We walk confidently knowing that because Jesus endured the cross and was victorious, our victory is assured once we keep our eyes on Jesus!



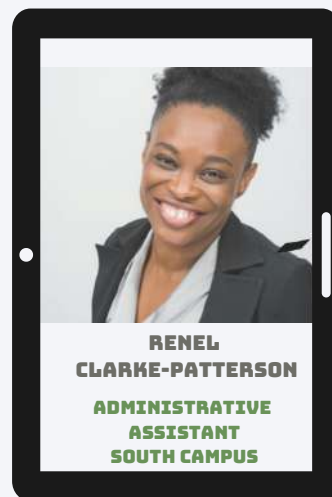
EBONY BURTON

**DIRECTOR
SOUTH CAMPUS**



**CHAMELA
HUYGHUE HAMILTON**

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
SOUTH CAMPUS**



**RENEL
CLARKE-PATTERSON**

**ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT
SOUTH CAMPUS**

We are in a celebratory mood at the **SOUTH CAMPUS** as we rejoice with 28 of our nursing students who were successful in the Nursing Council's practical exam. This is our highest pass rate to date in this exam and we are tremendously proud of our students.

We are thankful for our supportive team of nursing faculty and clinical instructors who work assiduously to ensure our students are successful.

USC South Campus has an **enrollment of 450 registered students** this semester; our highest registration to date.

Nursing enrollment has increased exponentially. Currently, **303 students are enrolled in the programme**, and we expect this number to increase with the January 2022 intake.

Our aim this year is to enhance our marketing strategies including partnering with our neighbouring SDA churches to promote our university.

Despite setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are pleased to also announce that our **nursing students commenced their clinical rotations from September, 2021,**

with 168 students assigned to community centres and hospitals to gain the required practical experience.

In the social sciences, **25 Social Work and Psychology students also started practicum placements** in various organizations.

We are sincerely grateful to both full-time and adjunct faculty for their unstinting service throughout this tumultuous year. We applaud your dedication and commitment.



MIGNON MAYNARD-SANCHO

COORDINATOR, GUYANA CAMPUS

(LEFT)

DAWN ARCHER
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT,
GUYANA CAMPUS

(RIGHT)



MARIO MODESTE

COORDINATOR, IDDU

GUYANA CAMPUS boasts a total of **68 registered students** pursuing degrees in Elementary Education, Behavioural Science, Social Work, Psychology, BBA Management, BA Finance and BS Nursing.

Our Lecturers are trained in Online teaching and Zoom usage to accommodate the new normal of online teaching. We now have six lecturers.

Our students have successfully transitioned to online and remote learning, and are still achieving high grades.

Our **first Nursing cohort completed the programme** and Graduated at the University's 1st Virtual Graduation held in November of 2020. The number of nursing and psychology applications have also increased.

Guyana Campus has renewed its registration to February 2024. We were also able to install an automatic switch over generator that will greatly relieve the stress of having to cut classes due to power outages.

We thank our lecturers and students, Guyana Conference of SDA and other stakeholders for their continued support. Most of all, we thank God.

At the **INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT (IDDU)**, we are all about improving the experience of our learners and instructional staff.

COURSE AUDITS

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone for your feedback during the auditing process. A special thank you goes out to the eDevelopers who worked hard to facilitate this process. Your contributions have been noted and taken into consideration for the coming semester. I would like to thank the faculty for their diligence in their online delivery. I would also like to recognize **Ms. Del Phillips, Mr. Dwayne Lawrence** and **Dr. Dave Cassie** for their hard work in course preparation and delivery.

USC SINGLE SIGN ON (SSO)

In September of 2019, in partnership with the Information Technology Department, we launched the USC SSO to facilitate easy access to USC's Web services and resources. This was facilitated by an external service provider. This service, though effective, was limited due to budget constraints. We are pleased to announce that **we have developed our own SSO**, affording us the opportunity to connect to unlimited services and offer numerous features.

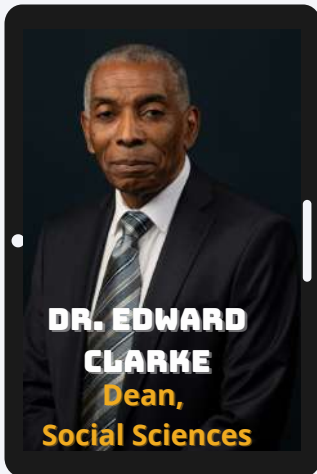
SOCIAL PRESENCE

We have heard your cries during the COVID-19 pandemic and have made strides to improve social presence across our campuses. As such, we have begun the **implementation of our very own social networking platform**. Features include feeds, events, groups, videos, photos, forums and more.

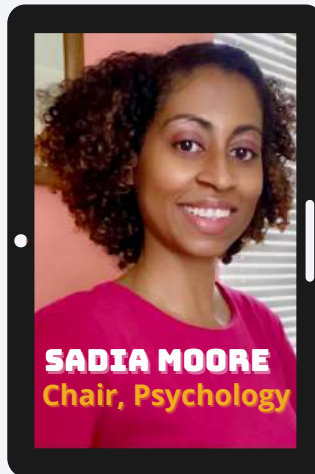
We are also revamping our **Center for Faculty Excellence** and **Center for Student Success** services to better serve your needs.

MENTAL HEALTH & REMOTE TEACHING

Q&A



DR. EDWARD CLARKE
Dean,
Social Sciences



SADIA MOORE
Chair, Psychology

What can USC faculty and staff do to identify and eliminate negative attitudes and stigmas relating to mental health in our community?

Recognize negative attitudes. Attitude is mindset, so it's essential to find out what attitudes exist and towards what. Data collection would be the starting point in responding to mental health challenges at USC. A questionnaire might be useful to obtain data on what negative attitudes exist. Data collection can ensure a more effective response to mental health challenges by getting into people's minds, and revealing what they think. This will facilitate informed intervention.

In addition to **recognition**, it is important to **develop a level of intervention**. Attitudes about USC should also be taken into consideration, because they can impact how employees think about themselves and their mental health in general.

Also, **emotional wellness workshops** that include physical activity, for example, programs such as the exercise segment at colloquium with Leroy Pierre, can be beneficial. Such activities, being memorable, positive and fun, can help to improve a person's mental health and wellbeing.

What can those teaching remotely do to ensure their mental health?

It is important to **have a routine** or schedule of activity. You should mimic your work routine as closely as possible, because it's easy to slip into the mood of *getting up late, rushing breakfast*, then hurriedly logging on to class, without even remembering that you need to prepare for the class.

Create, as far as possible, an environment that lends itself to quality instruction.

Home can be disruptive. There may be a lot of noise from dogs, as well as other extraneous interruptions. **You need a place that is quite accessible, yet one that poses a low risk of disturbance**, because that's not good for the students' attention or yours.

If you have access to limited equipment, such as one computer at home to be shared among family members, you might consider confining your instruction to your room when it's your turn to use the equipment.

Also, as part of your schedule, you should **plan what you will do when you're finished working**. If you having two class sessions, when will you prepare? When will you have lunch? If your lunch time is really your breakfast time, or you're still in your night clothes throughout the day, these situations don't lend themselves to a state of mind conducive to imparting knowledge and information to your students. **A professional must have an intentional attitude**. You need to turn on your camera so you have to **consider your physical presentation**.

These suggestions may sound simple but they are fundamental in preparing your mind. In order to instruct students professionally, it is critical when imparting knowledge to the students to have the right attitude, frame of mind and the best possible environment.



Is it possible for lecturers and students who have children and limited physical space to establish a routine at home?

Some faculty choose to go to the physical work-space to *normalize* their work environment and keep a familiar schedule, then return home. This can be a means of normalizing an abnormal situation.

Teachers should encourage their students to establish a routine as well in an attempt to normalize the classroom situation as far as possible. This is vital for both teachers and students, as **body and mind respond well to schedules and routine**. Some students now listen to lectures in the car with other family members. This is likely to have a disruptive impact. The student's attention span is also restricted in such a situation. Students may benefit if the session is recorded, but the learning experience might be more meaningful if notes are taken simultaneously with listening.

Accumulatively, disruptions can affect the learning process, impacting the quality of instruction. Resultantly, students may behave in an unstructured way; relaxing in their bedrooms; logging in but not being present in the class, etc.

How would this apply to one who doesn't like routine, or who doesn't know where to start?

Bear in mind that having a routine may help to lower your stress levels. Historically, we have long separated work from home, and we mentally process these in set ways and **lecturers do generally tend to fall into a routine**. Normally, when you leave home, you step into your work environment which has set activities to follow. One must be on time to start class. The lecturer must also be available to the students. **In the current *abnormal* situation, however, you may be prone to absorb more stress**. COVID has blurred the lines between work and home, creating dissonance between mind and body. The extent to which you can *normalize* that in your life may determine your stress levels.

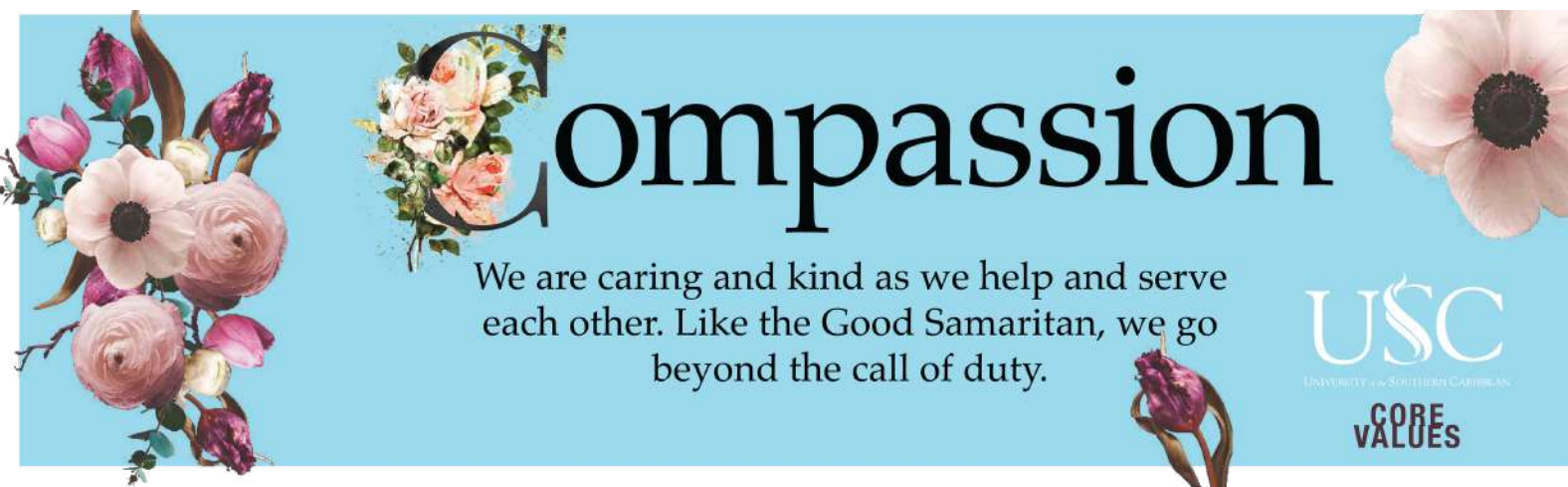
You should also be aware that **national environmental conditions can impact one's personal situation**. When you imbibe too much of the *abnormal* environment, it can affect one's ability to deal with what really is the normal environment.

CORE VALUES

Compassion

The SDE seeks to remind faculty, staff, students and other stakeholder-friends of the values at the heart of the service we offer through its **Core Values Project**

Ultimately, we aim to show Christ to one and all. One of the ways we do this is by showing compassion.



Compassion

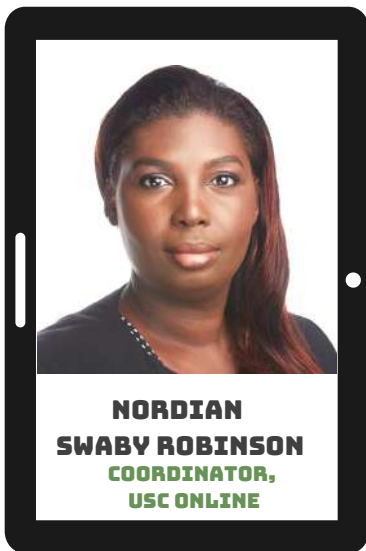
We are caring and kind as we help and serve each other. Like the Good Samaritan, we go beyond the call of duty.

USC
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN
CORE VALUES

LET'S TALK

Remaining Accountable

While Distant



Welcome to the 2021/2022 school year. Many of us may have found it to be a smooth start, while others may have found it to be rocky, but the perspective we hold begins with our level of accountability to ourselves, our students and the University as a whole.

To ensure that we have an awesome and productive school year, we must dwell on the key word **accountability** which is considered one of the most important factors in the online environment.

We hold our students to a particular standard, and in return they hold us to an even higher standard. As teaching faculty, here are a few guidelines to ensure that we emerge successful.

Be Accountable to Your Institution:

Follow the guidelines necessary for teaching in the online environment. Prepare your course outlines, account for your student's attendance and provide current lecture notes regardless of the field of study. Let's face it, education is evolving.

Be Accountable to Your Students:

Give diligent and timely feedback. Feedback should be more than just a 'yes', 'no' or 'excellent point'. Let's highlight the positive, ask for improvements on the negatives and push our students to think critically. Ensure that feedback is constant and within 24-hrs.

Remember your students are human, and not just a mere images or emojis that you see on your screen. They may be taking more than one course and have family and work obligations. It is therefore important to ensure that assignments are manageable; fulfill the learning objectives, and that you can provide feedback in a timely manner, regardless of the number of students.

Be Accountable to Yourself:

Find time for yourself and engage in a hobby to release stress and give you a well needed break from the screen. Meditate, read your favorite book, exercise, play a board game, and connect with your family. These are just a few of my choices.

"Accountability is the glue that ties commitment to the result" - Bob Proctor

When you become accountable, it fosters a habit of self-motivation. It also allows for self-reflection. Moreover, this may lead to 'self-efficacy trends' that will almost always lead to success.

Let's stay accountable for the 2021-2022 school year.

TEAM UPDATE

WELCOME DR. BOUCAUD

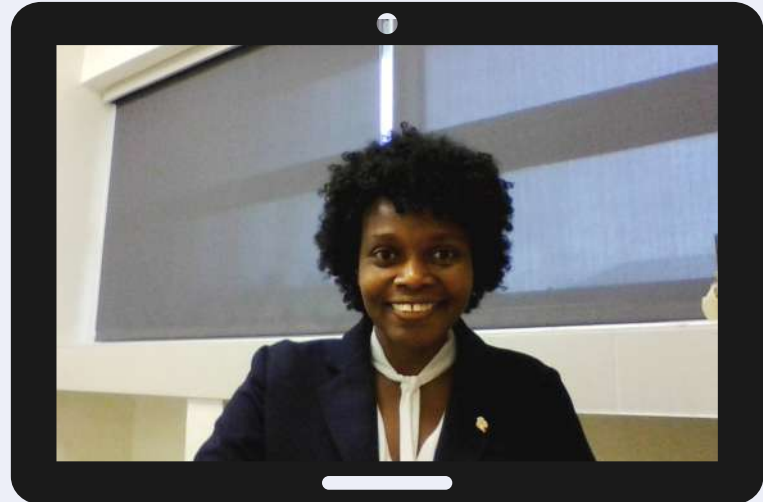
Dean, School of Distance Education
University of the Southern Caribbean

An Alumna Returns...

The School of Distance Education welcomes
Dr. Genevieve Boucaud!

Our team looks forward Dr. Boucaud's
Christian leadership as we continue our
journey beyond excellence!

Let us keep her in our prayers as she seeks
to be of service to God and humankind.



THANK YOU DR. LEROY HILL

Former Dean, School of Distance Education
University of the Southern Caribbean

A servant leader...

A man of God with outstanding work ethics
who values every member of his team.

The School of Distance Education and
the wider University were blessed to
have served alongside Dr. Leroy Hill.