

## **Portraits of Excellence: The USC Annual Student Scholarship Awards and Gala 2026.**

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 hosted 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**

- To encourage excellence in academia with an 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.
- To provide an avenue for personal and professional growth for students via exposure to a range of professional training environments.
- 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.
- To instill a spirit of community service and Christian love for humanity through involvement in community or nationwide-based projects.

- To provide an alternative means of sourcing tuition funding for students to achieve their academic goals.
- To create and maintain beneficial partnerships with private and public sector clients, and provide networking opportunities for USC and its public
- To build a sense of community among the student population and engender teamwork.

After having a hiatus in 2013, 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:
  - *Good Citizenship (to be determined by the Student Services Council).*
  - *Undergraduate students who are not in their first nor final year, with a GPA of 3.0 or above.*
  - *Willingness to be an Ambassador for USC, and embrace the Ideals of the USCian Man & Woman.*
  - *Willingness and ability to participate in all preparatory activities leading up to the final event.*
  - *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%

<b>Oral Presentation of the Research Findings</b>	10%
<b>The Talent/Skill Segment</b>	15%
<b>Impromptu Question</b>	5%
<b>Academic and Personal Development Sessions</b>	10%
<b>Community Development Project</b>	15%
<b>Cultural Display</b>	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **EMPHASIS FOR 2026 POE**

The emphasis will be on the United Nations sustainable development **Goal # 3 - Good Health and Well Being**.

Portraits of Excellence span a period of 10 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 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 **10** hours of community service; working on a particular project in sync with the theme for the scholarship pageant.

### **Gala Event**

The program will culminate in March 2026 at the University's Auditorium, with the delegates showcasing their talent pieces, and 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 delegates 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 (TT Dollars) are as follows:

#### **Scholarship Prizes:**

- 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                      \$7,500 for each

#### **Other prizes:**

- Eastern Divers Research Award                      \$10,000
- Woolford Community Project Award                      \$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                      \$3,000
- The People's Choice Award                      \$1000
- Best Oral Research Presentation                      \$500

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

### **The delegates for 2025 were:**

- Mr. Michael Garcia represented the Trinidad and Tobago Club (**Current Mr. USC**)
- Mr. Hansel Thomas represented St. Vincent and Grenada clubs-Vinada (*1st Runner Up Male*)

- Mr. Marques Bruce represented South Campus
- Mr. Asahel Joseph represented the Antigua Club
- Ms. Felesha Jack represented the St Lucia and Dominica Clubs (*1st Runner Up Female*)
- Ms. Ruqayya Abdul-Haqq represented Trinidad and Tobago Club
- Ms. Alicia Alicia Lewis represented Antigua Club (**Current Ms. USC**)
- Ms. Ahjea Jackson represented St. Vincent and Grenada clubs -Vinada

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 one radio interview opportunity, one university speaking appointment, one church speaking appointment, one 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 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