

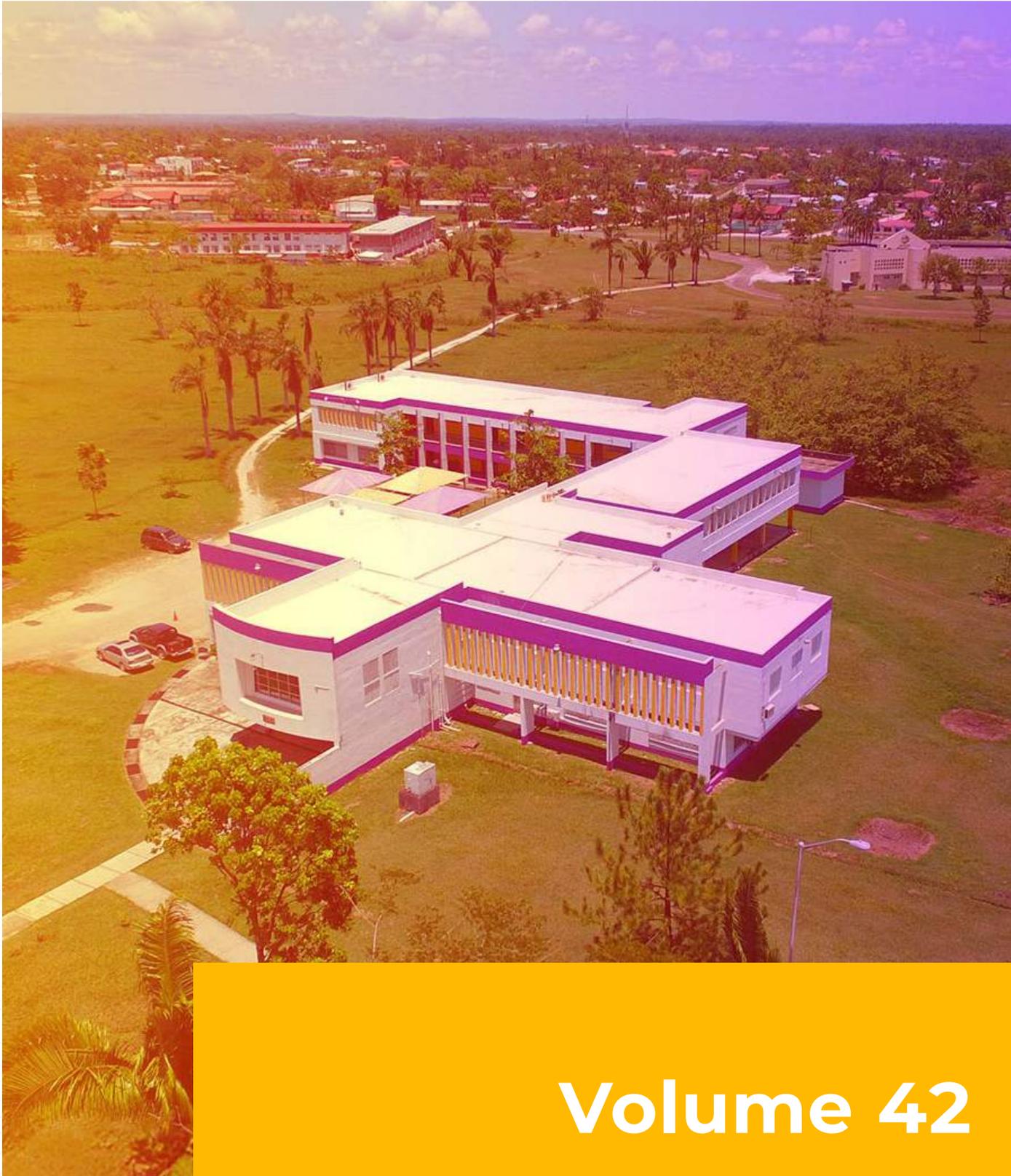
University of Belize



# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

April - June 2024

Education is not the preparation of life, education is life itself by John Dewey



Volume 42



**WELCOME**

***“A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.”***

***– Albert Einstein***

**Greetings from the Marketing & Communications Department!**

We are excited to present our new and improved Seasonal from the President's Desk! This publication is designed to keep you informed and engaged with the latest news from the University of Belize and the President's Office.

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*“Inspiring Innovation and Discovery.”*



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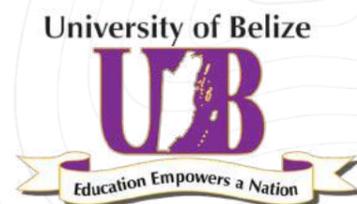


# THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE

CELEBRATES MAYA  
HERITAGE DAY 2024



The University of Belize celebrated Maya Heritage Day with great pride on April 3, 2024, on the Belmopan campus. This special occasion was honored under the theme "Upholding Resilience: The Crucial Role of Indigenous Leadership in Indigenous Communities." It was a wonderful way to pay tribute to the rich colorful culture and to honor the contributions of the Mayan people.



The commitment and determination to preserve their heritage and practices is highly admirable, especially in these changing and challenging times when traditions are not easily maintained. From ancient traditions to modern-day leadership, the Maya people exemplify resilience, wisdom, and strength. The National University was honored to commemorate this important day to recognize and uplift indigenous leadership in nurturing vibrant and resilient communities.

# THE 8<sup>TH</sup> MATHEMATICS SYMPOSIUM

A full house of eager minds ready to have fun with Mathematics filled the Jaguar Auditorium on the Belmopan Campus to be part of the 8th Annual Mathematics Symposium on April 10, 2024. The symposium was held under the theme “Mathematics: Empowering Minds, Enriching Lives”. The UB Steel performed with such passion to entertain the secondary and tertiary students in attendance. Ms. Miriam Willoughby - Deputy Director General, Statistical Institute of Belize gave the welcome address and Dr. Vincent Palacio - UB President, gave the opening remarks. The dynamic and engaging presenters consisted of:

The Symposium aimed to raise awareness of mathematics' significance in daily life, as a foundation for various disciplines, and to showcase ongoing research in Belize and beyond. It sought to inspire faculty, students, and the community to explore mathematics-related research and careers.



- Dr. Minerva Brauss and Ms. Brianna Bradley (Francis Marion University, NC, USA) - “Coaching and Mentoring for Underrepresented Undergraduate Students in STEM,”
- Dr. David Robertson (University of Belize) - “Using Archival Panel and Microdata for Independent Research: Belizean’s Happiness,”
- Mr. Andres Ramirez (University of Belize) - “Cryptography,”

- SJCJC Students – Ariel Peters, Rayanna Charley, Bryn Roca, and Taye Parkinson (St John’s College Junior College, Belize) - “Mathematics at its Foundation and Beyond,”
- Dr. Daniel Brauss (Francis Marion University, NC, USA) - “Approximating the Magnetic Field in a Steady State Model for Magnetohydrodynamics”

## THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION & ARTS EVENING OF THE ARTS

The University's Faculty of Education hosted a spectacular Evening of the Arts on April 11, 2024. Live performances spanned music, poetry, comedy, dance, songs, drama, Kriol, and Garifuna drumming, captivating audiences of all ages. MC David Morey charmed with his natural talents, while headliners Cocono Bwai and Nello Player, alongside other performers like violinist Cindy Burgos and guitarist Leon Banks, and Garifuna drummer Joshua Arana, showcased the best of talent and creativity.



## CELEBRATION OF GARIFUNA SURVIVAL CEREMONY

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE

The University of Belize commemorated this pivotal day with a ceremony in the Jaguar Auditorium on the Belmopan campus on April 12, 2024. President Dr. Vincent Palacio was honored to participate, recognizing the resilience of the Garifuna people and their enduring commitment to honoring ancestral connections and traditions essential to their survival.



*Garifuna Survival Day holds profound significance in Garifuna culture, marking 227 years since their ancestors arrived on the shores of Rotan, Honduras, following exile by the British from their Caribbean Island homeland of St. Vincent.*

# EXPECTACULAR ACTIVITIES

## The Wellness Center Hosted its Relaxation Fair

The Relaxation Fair, organized by the Student Affairs Wellness Center, offers students a chance to unwind before final exams on May 02, 2024, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Student Development Center. Festive games, treats, painting, and free 10-minute massages were provided to promote healthy coping mechanisms and mental well-being practices. The event aimed to foster appropriate coping mechanisms and raise awareness of the Wellness Center's services for student support.



## Congratulations to the National ATLIB Football Champions!

Congratulations to our Black Jaguars! Your hard work has truly paid off. The University and the community celebrated their victory with a grand motorcade, demonstrating our pride and support. Your dedication and determination have led to an impressive triumph, making you the 2024 National ATLIB Football Champions. Keep shining as star athletes and a powerhouse team. Go Black Jaguars!



## Congratulations Ms. Abidas Ash

The University of Belize proudly congratulates Ms. Abidas Ash from the UB ERI staff for being one of five CARICOM nationals awarded the prestigious postgraduate scholarship by the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM). Ms. Ash received the scholarship at the 6th PISLM High-level Forum in Grenada on April 11, 2024. This scholarship enables her to pursue advanced studies in soil and land management at the University of West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago. Her research will focus on critical areas such as soil health assessment, land degradation, or related topics under the CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 1 Project.



## The University of Belize Hosted the Fourth Belize Forensics Science Symposium

On April 9, 2024, the University of Belize, in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs, New Growth Industries, the National Forensic Science Service, and the Belize Crime Observatory, hosted the 4th Belize Forensic Science Symposium at the Jaguar Auditorium on the Belmopan campus. This symposium signifies our steadfast commitment to advancing forensic science locally and globally. Together, we will explore cutting-edge techniques, exchange insights, and foster collaboration to enhance our forensic capabilities. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all participants, speakers, and organizers for their dedication and enthusiasm. Let us propel this symposium forward as a catalyst for innovation and progress in forensic science!



## The University of Belize & the Belmopan City Council Met

UB President, Dr. Vincent Palacio met with Belmopan Mayor, Pablo Cawich to explore avenues of mutual collaboration between the National University and the Belmopan City Council on April 11, 2024, at the Belmopan campus. The discussion included possible projects that could contribute to the economic development and growth of the city of Belmopan. Our President had the pleasure of extending heartfelt congratulations to Mayor Cawich and his dedicated team on their triumphant victory in the city council elections. Both institutions look forward to a promising partnership ahead, dedicated to the growth and prosperity of our beloved city.



## The Faculty of Education and Arts Open Day 2024

The Faculty of Education and Arts held its Open Day in the Gymnasium at the Belmopan campus on April 24, 2024. The event was brimming with fun activities and opportunities to showcase the faculty's achievements. President Dr. Vincent Palacio and Dr. Thisbe Usher both delivered remarks to officially kick off the open day.





**THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE  
AT THE AGRICULTURE &  
TRADE SHOW**

It's that time of the year when the agriculture showgrounds are prepped for another year of showing and telling of many products and services offered by a myriad of businesses and organizations from across the country. Of course, the National University was part of this year's trade show in full swing.

Our Central Farm campus students and staff were out in full force to showcase the far-fresh products as well as the technological capabilities involved in agriculture. Visitors enjoyed the fun games, queried programs, entered the raffle for a chance to win a free semester, and applied online for the upcoming semester.



**THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE  
HOSTED FUN DAY**

On a beautiful and sunny day on May 03rd, faculty, staff, and students came together for a day of relaxation and fun activities. The competitive spirit was ignited as players engaged in various games like tug-o-war, football, volleyball, wings eating contest, and watermelon eating contest. Spectators cheered the teams on and brought more energy to the day. Others took advantage of the opportunity to be pampered at the UB Beauty and Spa Centre. This meant that all students, faculty and staff are encouraged to take a break from school/work and spend a day enjoying the wonderful activities being organized for you. With the semester coming to an end, it's the ideal opportunity for students, faculty and staff to unite as a Black Jaguar Community for a day filled with games, laughter, friendly competition and fun!



# THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE

## HELD ITS FMSS RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The Faculty of Management and Social Sciences (FMSS) held its 13th Annual Research Conference on May 2, 2024, under the theme “Advancing Research: From Theory to Reality,” at the Jaguar Auditorium in Belmopan. Dr. Vincent Palacio, UB’s President, delivered the welcome remarks, followed by the opening remarks from Dr. Bernard Watler, FMSS Dean. Dr. Dion Daniels, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Science and Technology, gave the keynote address. The event showcased the following research papers, highlighting the collaborative and innovative spirit of FMSS:

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Avekadvie Mano, Assistant Professor, FMSS. This conference was a significant achievement for the faculty, underscoring its commitment to advancing research and fostering academic excellence.



- Assessing the Implementation of Quality Management Principles: A Case Study of The Gold Standard Hotels in Cayo by Samantha Banner
- Exploring the Impact of Cryptocurrency in the Belizean Economy by Anthony Middleton
- A Study on Managing the Stigmatization of Mental Health and Wellness in the Workplace by Sasha Brown

- Design of an Ex-post Method to Evaluate the Social, Economic, Environment, and Security of Highway Development in Belize by Dr. Romaldo Lewis
- Declining Religiosity in Belize by Dr. Philip Castillo

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE BELIZE COLLABORATED WITH THE SEAMANS CARBON PROJECT

On Tuesday, May 7th, the University of Belize hosted researcher collaborators engaged in the SEAMANS Carbon Project. This project is led by Dr. Gerards Summers and Dr. Aaron Lim from the University College Cork (UCC), Ireland. The project is also technically guided by Dr. Stacey Felgate and Dr. David Price. The University of Belize is the principal collaborator with UCC on this project through Mr. Antonio Cano of the Natural Resource Management Program.

The project aims to enhance seagrass habitat mapping and blue carbon capacity in Belize and Ireland through innovative collaboration with local stakeholders. The researchers are currently here in Belize as part of the project kickoff. To that end, the researchers visited with faculty members of the Science Department to discuss research opportunities for faculty and students. They also toured the UB laboratory facilities and met with the UB ERI staff to further discuss potential synergies. Lastly, the researchers met with Dr. Palacio, the UB President, to present an overview of the project objectives and discuss further avenues for collaboration and research beyond this current project.

This SEAMANS\_Carbon Project will run until October 2026. Should you want to learn more about this project, its outputs, or opportunities to participate, contact:

Antonio Cano at [acano@ub.edu.bz](mailto:acano@ub.edu.bz).



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK VOLUME 42



## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE & MUFFLES JUNIOR COLLEGE FORGE NEW PARTNERSHIP TO ENHANCE STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

In a significant step towards enhancing higher education and fostering community engagement, The University of Belize (UB) was delighted to announce a newly signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Muffles Junior College (MJC). This partnership marked a milestone in academic collaboration and reflected both institutions' commitment to enriching student experiences and supporting community growth.

The MOU was signed in a ceremony held at MJC's campus in Orange Walk on May 10, 2024, attended by Dr. Vincent Palacio, President of UB, and Mr. Adrian Leiva, Dean of MJC. This new agreement paved the way for MJC students who have completed their Associate Degree Programs to transition seamlessly into corresponding Bachelor Programs at UB's Faculty of Management and Social Sciences.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE AND CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE & RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE FORGE COLLABORATION

On Friday, May 10, 2024, Executive Director of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), Mr. Ansari Hosein, paid a courtesy call to UB President, Dr. Vincent Palacio at the campus in Belmopan. We're thrilled to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at fostering collaboration in the realms of science, technology, and innovation! This partnership focuses on sharing expertise, resources, and opportunities for mutual growth. From R&D strategies to technical assistance, human resource capacity building to joint ventures – together, we're poised to make strides in innovation and create a brighter future.

## NURTURING THE FUTURE OF OUR ASPIRING STUDENT NURSES

In the bustling world of healthcare, nurses are the heartbeat, the unsung heroes who embody compassion, expertise, and dedication. Their tireless efforts and unwavering commitment often go unnoticed, yet they form the backbone of our healthcare system. President, Dr. Vincent Palacio supports our aspiring students as they continue on their journey towards becoming fully-fledged caregivers.

To all the nurses, thank you for your unwavering dedication, your boundless kindness, and your unwavering commitment to healing. You are the heart and soul of healthcare, and your impact reaches far beyond measure. We honor and appreciate you today and every day.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK VOLUME 42



## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE EXTENDS OUTREACH EFFORTS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WITH COROZAL JUNIOR COLLEGE

The University of Belize (UB), Belize's premier public higher education institution, was pleased to announce a new strategic partnership with Corozal Junior College (CJC), solidified through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on May 10, 2024, at the CJC campus in Corozal. This collaboration underscored UB's ongoing commitment to its mandate of national outreach and support for high-quality educational institutions across the country.

The MOU established a framework for institutional cooperation between UB and CJC, allowing for a seamless matriculation process for students transferring from CJC's Associate Degree Programs to UB's Bachelor Programs in the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences. This includes programs in Business Administration, Tourism, Hospitality, Accounting, Public Sector Management, and Criminal Justice and Criminology.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. DEBORAH WILLIAMS

Congratulations to Dr. Deborah Williams! The University of Belize proudly celebrates her remarkable achievement of earning her PhD in Education from Oklahoma State University. Dr. Williams is a Faculty Member at UB's Regional Language Center.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE & THOMPSON RIVER UNIVERSITY REKINDLE PARTNERSHIP WITH ENHANCED ACADEMIC EXCHANGE PROGRAMS!

The University of Belize is pleased to announce the revitalization of its collaborative partnership with Thompson River University (TRU), following a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This partnership, which has significantly benefited both institutions, marks a continued commitment to fostering academic and cultural exchanges between Canada and Belize.



The relationship between UB's Natural Resources Management (NRM) program and TRU has been a cornerstone of international academic collaboration, providing students and faculty from both universities with unique opportunities for growth and learning. This year, the partnership has been further enriched with the introduction of government-sponsored study abroad programs, allowing UB students to engage in visits for a semester at TRU.

This collaboration was highlighted during a recent joint academic event on Tuesday, April 23, 2024, where UB's NRM and chemistry students presented their community outreach projects and thesis work. In turn, TRU's faculty shared their latest research on ecosystems and wildlife, bringing valuable international perspectives to UB's academic community.

The event also included an interactive session where students from both institutions exchanged ideas on further enhancing the partnership. This dialogue is essential for shaping the future of this bi-national relationship, ensuring it continues to meet the evolving educational and cultural needs of both student bodies.



The University of Belize expresses its gratitude to the students who participated in the presentations and extends a special thanks to Dean Dr. Apolonio Aguilar and Science Chair Ms. Karen Link for their leadership and dedication to reestablishing this important international link. The event was organized by Mr. Joaquin David Magana and the student who presented were: Julissa Balam, Kamille Mendez and Kelsey Vansen.

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE IS REPRESENTED AT THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING WORKSHOP**

The University of Belize (UB) participated in the Multi-Stakeholder Marine Spatial Planning Workshop on May 8th-10th. This workshop aimed to kick off participatory spatial planning activities to achieve Milestones 4 & 6 within the scope and goals of the more extensive Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan (BSOP) process. The 3-day session organized by the Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute (CZMAI) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) overviewed the current state of the BSOP, including areas under consideration for further protection and the results from the Ocean Use Survey. Participants also discussed potential future scenarios, collaborated to identify compatible and conflicting uses of the marine space, and discussed criteria and performance measures based on the BSOP goals. The workshop concluded with a high-level overview of the Marxan tool and its potential use in the BSOP process. UB was represented by Dr. Sherlene Enriquez-Savery, Vice President, Dr. Apolonio Aguilar, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, and Mr. Antonio Cano, Natural Resource Management Lecturer.



**THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE HOSTS A CERTIFICATION CEREMONY FOR THE INSTITUTE OF BANKING AND FINANCE**

The University of Belize held a certification ceremony to award the cohort from the UB Institute of Banking and Finance (UB-IBF) on May 16, 2024. The twenty-one awardees received their completion certificates. 5 awardees received their certification in “Cyber Security” while 16 awardees received certification in “Regulatory AntiMoney Laundering and Financial Crime Prevention”. Ms. Stephanie Windsor was recognized as the top professional in the Cybersecurity Cohort, while Ms. Sharlene Jones stood out as the top professional in the Regulatory AMLCFT Cohort. In attendance was Ms. Michelle Martin, Chairlady and CEO of ComplianceAid and AMLFC Institute as the guest speaker and honorary guest, Mr. Claude Haylock, Director General, Financial Services Commission of Belize.

**ATLIB REPRESENTATIVES MET THE PRIME MINISTER**

On Monday, May 13, 2024, representatives from ATLIB institutions had the honor of meeting with our Prime Minister to discuss the possibility of standardizing the tax rate charged on Adjunct contracts. The proposal is for an overall 6% tax rate to be charged. It's a significant step towards streamlining processes and fostering growth in our educational sector. Vice President, Dr. Sherlene Enriquez-Savery represented the University of Belize.

## BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY IN HEAVY METAL CONTAMINATION IN BELIZE

A COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BELIZE, MERCER UNIVERSITY,  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT,  
& THE BELIZE DEFENCE FORCE



Researchers from Mercer University, USA, visited the University of Belize (UB) Belmopan Campus on October 4th and 5th 2023 to seek research collaboration in heavy metal contamination. The international team, comprised of Distinguished University Professor Adam Kiefer, Dr. Addie Buerck, Dr. Adrian Vasquez, and undergraduate student Ben Stewart, met with UB administrators and senior staff of the Department of the Environment (DOE) to identify high-level areas of research collaboration. This meeting was followed by a tour of the Hummingbird Analytical Laboratory (HAL) and a meeting with faculty and staff at the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) for a presentation by Mercer University on their research work and discussions around faculty-level collaboration areas. On October 5th, the Mercer University researchers trained UB faculty, staff, Bachelor-level thesis students, and DOE staff on the use of a portable X-ray Fluorescence (pXRF) spectrometer and its applications in heavy metal contamination research to complement the already existing research capacity in mercury analysis at UB. Subsequently, Professor Adam Kiefer delivered a seminar talk to UB undergraduate thesis students on his research work in mercury contamination in artisanal gold mining and lead contamination in paint.

This presentation sparked immediate interest in our UB students, since several of them will conduct thesis projects in heavy metal analysis, and will now form part of a second and more comprehensive set of training activities with the Mercer team, who will be in Belize from May 14th to June 2nd 2024. There, they will be exposed first-hand, in an immersive experience with Mercer University students, with lead testing kits to test the presence of lead and other heavy metals in spray paint, street art murals, park playgrounds, and military shooting ranges, and they will also use pXRF and other portable analytical equipment. Our students will furthermore learn how to test for heavy metals in air and water samples. Then, the team will continue to train at the UB HAL on the use of the Direct Mercury Analyzer and the importance of quality control and quality assurance in mercury laboratory analysis.



The training provided by Mercer University will forge future ties with UB, the DOE, and the Belize Defence Force (BDF) in developing research capacity in heavy metal contamination to make meaningful impacts in Belize, addressing current national gaps in heavy metal pollution, environmental health, and human health.

# THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE CENTRAL FARM CAMPUS HOSTED ITS BIOCHAR TRAINING

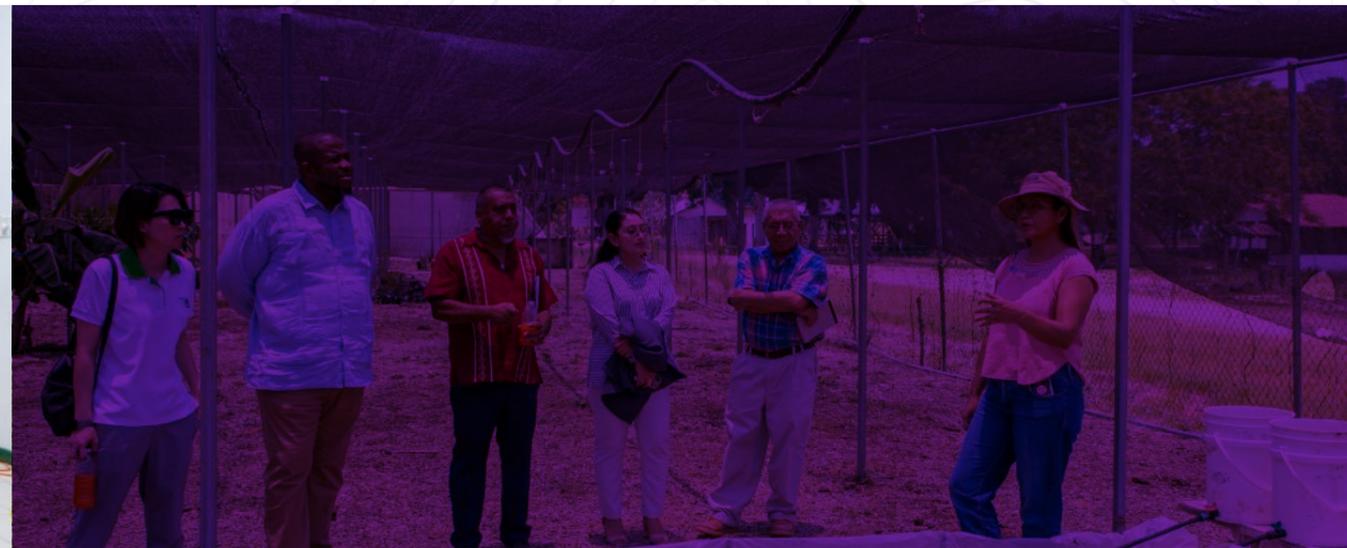
On May 21, 2024, the University of Belize Central Farm Campus proudly hosted its BioChar Training Ceremony under the inspiring theme, "From Soil to Strength: Women Leading the Organic Gardening Revolution." This event, generously funded by the Taiwanese ICDF project, aimed to empower women in the field of organic gardening through the innovative use of BioChar technology.



The ceremony began with a warm welcome address from Mr. Maximilliano Ortega, Director of the Central Farm Campus. His address set a positive and enthusiastic tone for the day, highlighting the importance of sustainable agriculture and the pivotal role women play in advancing organic gardening practices.

Following Mr. Ortega's welcome, UB President Dr. Vincent Palacio delivered remarks that underscored the University's commitment to promoting sustainable agricultural practices and the empowerment of women in agriculture. Dr. Palacio's words resonated deeply with the audience, reinforcing the significance of the day's theme.

The event was further enriched by the presence of distinguished guests, including keynote speakers Mrs. Alexya Perez and Mr. Roberto Pan. Mrs. Perez, a Foreign Service Officer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Immigration, shared valuable insights into the intersection of agriculture, diplomacy, and women's empowerment. Her speech highlighted the global relevance of sustainable practices and the crucial role of women in driving these initiatives forward.



This event not only celebrated the achievements of women in agriculture but also highlighted the transformative power of sustainable practices. The University of Belize Central Farm Campus remains dedicated to fostering an environment of learning, innovation, and empowerment, paving the way for a sustainable and inclusive agricultural future.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE HELD ITS ANNUAL SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM 2024

The Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) at the University of Belize hosted its highly anticipated Annual Science Symposium 2024 under the theme "Creating Knowledge Through Scientific Research." This event highlighted the innovative research conducted by students and professionals within the faculty, fostering a collaborative environment for scientific exploration and discovery.

The symposium commenced with a warm welcome address by Dean Dr. Apolonio Aguilar, setting a tone of enthusiasm and academic rigor for the day. The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Eduardo Bariantos, a Ph.D. candidate at Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology, who inspired the attendees with insights into cutting-edge marine science research.

The symposium featured a series of seven compelling presentations that showcased the breadth and depth of research being undertaken at the University of Belize. Each presentation reflected the commitment to advancing scientific knowledge and addressing real-world challenges.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK VOLUME 42



## THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE RECEIVED A COURTESY VISIT FROM THE SWEDISH AMBASSADOR

On May 28, 2024, Swedish Ambassador, H.E. Anders Bengtson and Honorary Consul of Sweden in Belize, Mr. Emile Mena paid a courtesy visit to the President of the University of Belize, Dr. Vincent Palacio and representatives from the Faculty of Science and Technology. The discussion covered collaborative opportunities aimed at ways to advance and develop higher education.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE MET WITH DIGI MET TO DISCUSS COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

On May 30, 2024, UB President, Dr. Vincent Palacio and his team met with Dionne Clarke-Emtage and her Digi team for the Ideahub Huawei's interactive smart screen displays being showcased. They highlighted significant features tailored for educational applications, particularly the Flex Classroom.

The discussion was centered on potential collaboration opportunities and exploring avenues to implement. Some areas of interest were the provision of Cyber Security Training (FORTINET), other training opportunities, partnership on future projects, and assistance with the Fiber upgrade project.

## GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE EMBARKS ON COMPREHENSIVE FISCAL CONSOLIDATION PLAN WITH SUPPORT FROM THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

The Government of Belize has launched a comprehensive fiscal consolidation plan with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to address public spending inefficiencies and promote financial sustainability. The initiative involves modernizing Public Financial Management (PFM) by strengthening financial management, procurement, and technical infrastructure, as well as capacity building.



A key component of the plan is a partnership with the University of Belize, which will develop and implement a training program to address gaps in PFM skills among public service employees. This program aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public fund management, aligning with the broader goals of fiscal stability and enhanced public service delivery.

The total budget for this initiative is US\$1,170,506 (BZ\$2,341,012), with key partners including the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment, the Ministry of the Public Service, Constitutional and Political Reform and Religious Affairs, and the University of Belize. This collaboration is expected to ensure sustainable modernization of Belize's financial management systems and improve the capacity of the national university in the financial management sector.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE'S INSTITUTE OF BANKING AND FINANCE HELD ITS INAUGURAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

On June 4, 2024, the University of Belize's Institute of Banking and Finance (UB-IBF) held its inaugural Advisory Board Meeting. The board will provide expert guidance, industry insights, trends, and strategic leadership to UB-IBF. Dr. Vincent Palacio, UB President, and Dr. Bernard Watler, Dean of the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, expressed gratitude for the board's efforts in fostering industry-academia partnerships crucial for Belize's development. The UB-IBF offers professional development and certification courses on topics like anti-money laundering, financial crimes prevention, cybersecurity, and FinTech.

## UB INSTITUTE OF BANKING & FINANCE

So far, 63 participants have completed these certifications. Upcoming courses include Fraud Risk Management, FinTech, AML-CFT-CFP for Regulators, and Cybersecurity.

### Advisory Board Members:

- Financial Services Commission of Belize: Mr. Claude Haylock, Ms. Nilda Sosa
- Financial Intelligence Unit Belize: Mrs. Leni Ysaguirre McGann
- Belize Bankers Association: Mr. Gregory Maheia, Mr. Stephen Duncan
- RF&G Insurance: Mr. Andrew JM Roe
- Central Bank of Belize: Mrs. Laetitia Murillo, Mr. Emory Ford
- University of Belize: Dr. Bernard Watler

## UB'S HUMMINGBIRD ANALYTICAL LABORATORY

HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE WORLD MAP BY THE PRESTIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL NATURE

The Hummingbird Analytical Laboratory (HAL) at the University of Belize's Belmopan Campus has emerged as one of only two microplastics laboratories in the Americas, participating in a global network of 15 labs for harmonized microplastics monitoring. This achievement is supported by the UK government through the Commonwealth Litter Programme (CLiP) and the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP), with implementation by Cefas and partnership with the Belize Department of the Environment (DOE). The HAL now boasts advanced analytical equipment and trained staff capable of handling microplastics in various environmental matrices.

Current microplastics lab network



The University of Belize celebrates the authors of the journal article "Creation of an international laboratory network towards global microplastics monitoring harmonisation," led by Dr. Adil Bakir of Cefas, with co-authors from UB's Faculty of Science and Technology and the DOE. The article, published in Nature, highlights the critical need for standardized microplastics monitoring to inform high-level policy-making.

The HAL is also expanding its capabilities in microplastics, ocean acidification, blue carbon, mercury, water quality, and pesticide residue analysis through projects funded by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This positions the HAL as a national leader in environmental research and a regional hub for addressing global pollution and climate change challenges.

## U.S. EMBASSY CONTINUES SUPPORT FOR BELIZE

ENHANCING ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING LAWS AND STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE

The U.S. Embassy, through its International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Unit, continues to support Belize in enhancing its anti-money laundering (AML) laws and governance. In collaboration with the National Anti-Money Laundering Committee (NAMLC) and the University of Belize, they hosted the second annual AML/CFT Conference. This event brought together nearly 200 in-person and 300 virtual attendees from the public and private sectors to discuss best practices and modern compliance challenges in countering money laundering and terrorist financing.



U.S. Ambassador Michelle Kwan highlighted the importance of the U.S.-Belize partnership in combating transnational crime. Experts from the U.S., Belize, and internationally addressed topics such as civil forfeiture, financial inclusion, money laundering indicators, and cybercrime. Minister of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries, Hon. Kareem Musa, emphasized Belize's commitment to enhancing its AML/CFT/CPF framework, noting the global challenges and the impact of financial crimes on the nation's stability and security.

University of Belize President Dr. Vincent Palacio stressed UB's role in providing training, research, and support to key regulatory agencies. Financial Intelligence Unit Director Leni Ysaguirre McGann emphasized the significance of the conference in fostering robust AML/CFT discussions.

The conference underscores the ongoing partnership between the U.S. and Belize to strengthen AML laws and governance.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR VERY OWN

DR. LISA JOHNSON, DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Dr. Lisa Johnson's expertise shines bright in the pages of the Journal of the Caribbean College of Surgeons, where her distinguished guest lecture delivered at the 21st Annual Symposium in Belize City, has now been published in its entirety. It is a call to arms which reminds colleagues about who they are or should be as surgeons, and that the totality of their abilities should not revert to the reductionist view of only a knife. She ended her lecture with a strong but powerful message "I am Dr. Lisa Johnson, and I am and will always be, a Surgeon." Congratulations, Dr. Johnson, on this well-deserved recognition of your invaluable contributions to the field of surgery!

## EMPOWERING EDUCATORS: UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE HOSTS COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING WORKSHOP

The University of Belize is hosting a Four-Day Competency-Based Learning Workshop on June 24th -27th 2024, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Led by expert facilitators from the University of Texas at Tyler, this workshop is tailored for pre-primary and primary school educators, curriculum developers, and education leaders across Belize.

It is designed to enhance education quality through Competency-Based Learning, this workshop will explore:

- Principles and benefits of CBL
- Effective strategies for implementation
- Development of competency-based assessments
- Collaboration and best practice sharing



## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ANNOUNCES NEWLY ELECTED VICE CHAIRPERSON

The Board of Trustees of the University of Belize (UB) is pleased to announce that Dr. Luz Longworth was elected as the Vice Chairperson of the Board at its meeting of 13th June 2024.

Dr. Longworth holds a Doctorate in Business Administration (Higher Education Management) from the University of Bath in the United Kingdom and is currently the Senior Corporate Director of Sandals Corporate University.

The Chairman of UB's Board of Trustees, Godfrey Smith, said "Dr. Longworth's deep and relevant experience as a former Pro Vice-Chancellor for Global Affairs of the University of the West Indies and a former Principal of UWI's Open Campus positions her to make a substantial contribution to UB's development. We are excited to have her on board."

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE AND BELIZE SUGAR INDUSTRIES

### SIGN MOU TO BOOST NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

The University of Belize (UB) and Belize Sugar Industries Limited (BSI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance national development through educational and technical cooperation. This partnership will provide student internships, job placements, and advance soil analysis and tissue culture technologies.



Key elements of the MoU include:

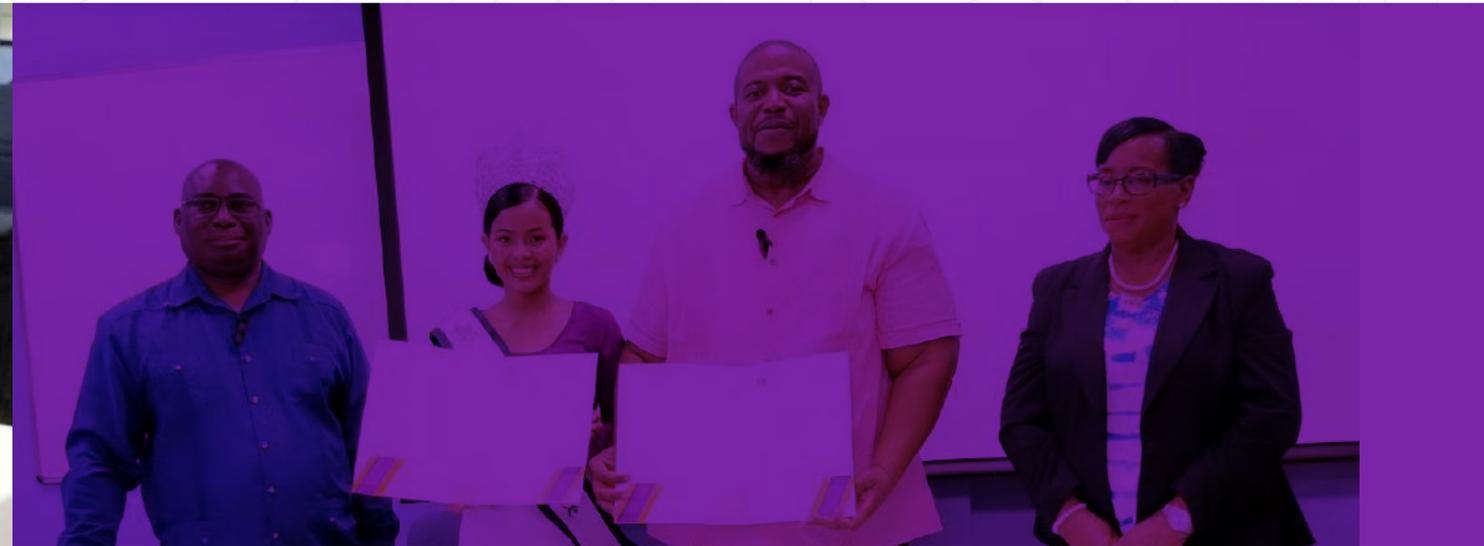
- **Human Capital Development:** Offering critical experiences through student internships and job placements, allowing UB students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings. This initiative aims to equip graduates to contribute to Belize's development and provide BSI with fresh talent and perspectives.
- **Soil Analysis Enhancement:** The collaboration will upgrade the Hummingbird Analytical Laboratory (HAL) to a comprehensive agricultural soil testing facility. BSI's donation of reagents and equipment will enable HAL to perform a full range of soil tests, which is vital for farmers to optimize yields and use agrochemicals efficiently.
- **Micropropagation Technologies:** UB and BSI will work together on micropropagation techniques to maintain the health of agricultural crops. This includes improving disease testing methods and building capacity to address plant diseases exacerbated by climate change.

This partnership aims to foster sustainable agricultural practices and strengthen the technical and educational capacities within Belize.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE AND THE ILS PHOENIX

### SIGN A CONTRACT TO APPOINT MISS WORLD BELIZE AS BRAND AMBASSADOR AND OFFER MASTER SCHOLARSHIP

The University of Belize (UB) and The ILS Phoenix have signed an agreement appointing Miss Noelia Hernandez, the reigning Miss World Belize, as UB's Brand Ambassador. This partnership includes a comprehensive \$24,000 BZD scholarship for Miss Hernandez to pursue an MBA program at UB, starting in August 2024, enhancing ties between education and community leadership.



The signing ceremony took place at the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences (FMSS) Campus, emphasizing the university's commitment to visibility and recruitment. Miss Hernandez will promote UB's programs and initiatives, conduct workshops on confidence building and public speaking, and leverage her social media presence to publicize UB's monthly programs.

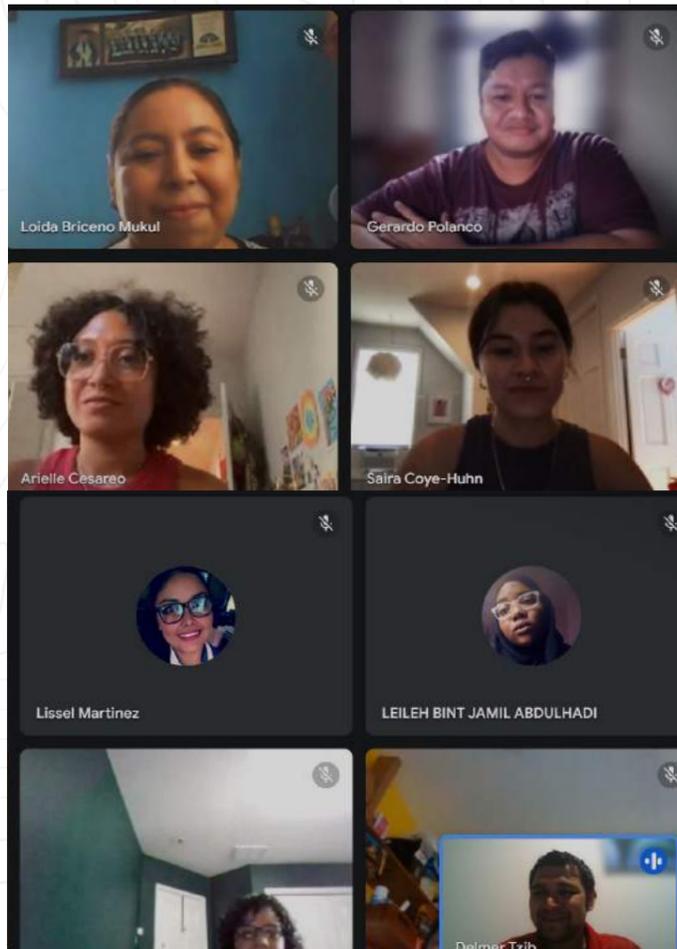
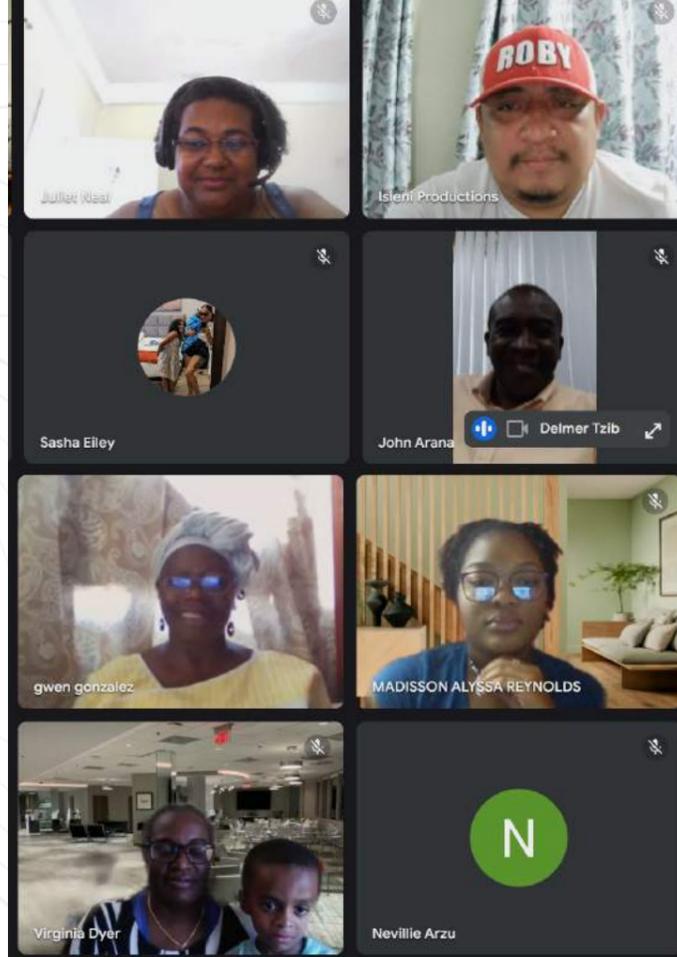
UB President Dr. Vincent Palacio and The ILS Phoenix Director Dr. Lorna McKay both highlighted the significance of this partnership in fostering educational growth and community involvement. The agreement, effective June 21, 2024, sets a new standard for university-community collaborations, aiming to boost student recruitment and retention while supporting Miss Hernandez's professional development.

**THE INTERCULTURAL INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE INSTITUTE**

IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE START OF CLASSES FOR OUR COURSES INTRODUCTION TO CONVERSATIONAL GARIFUNA AND INTRODUCTION TO CONVERSATIONAL YUCATEC MAYA

These courses are designed to be an interactive and engaging learning experience. Participants will not only learn the essential elements of the Garifuna and Yucatec Maya Languages, but also engage in dialogues, games, storytelling, and other activities, fostering a deeper understanding of the vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and cultural context of the Garifuna and Yucatec Maya language. By the end of the course, participants will have practical language skills and a deeper appreciation for the Garifuna and Yucatec Maya cultures.

The courses will be held every Tuesday/Thursday from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm for eight weeks commencing this week. The lecturers are Dr. Gwen Nunez-Gonzalez, who will lecture in the "Introduction to Conversational Garifuna" class, and Ms. Loida Mukul, who will lecture in the "Introduction to Conversational Yucatec Maya" class.



**FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK VOLUME 42**



**APPLAUDING SHEENA ZUNIGA'S ADVOCACY AT THE CDB'S 54TH ANNUAL MEETING IN OTTAWA**

The University's very own Sheena Zuniga represented the National Garifuna Council at the Caribbean Development Bank's (CDB) 54th Annual Meeting, held last week in Ottawa, Canada. She is also a member of CDB's Indigenous Advisory Group.

We want to applaud Ms. Zuniga on her presentation to the CDB Board of Directors on behalf of the indigenous and tribal peoples of the Caribbean. She discussed key issues that affect Indigenous and Tribal peoples, such as climate change, the erosion of cultural heritage, and the lack of recognition of land rights. Ms. Zuniga emphasized the importance of recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, and the necessity for their inclusion in regional development processes to ensure sustainable and equitable growth.

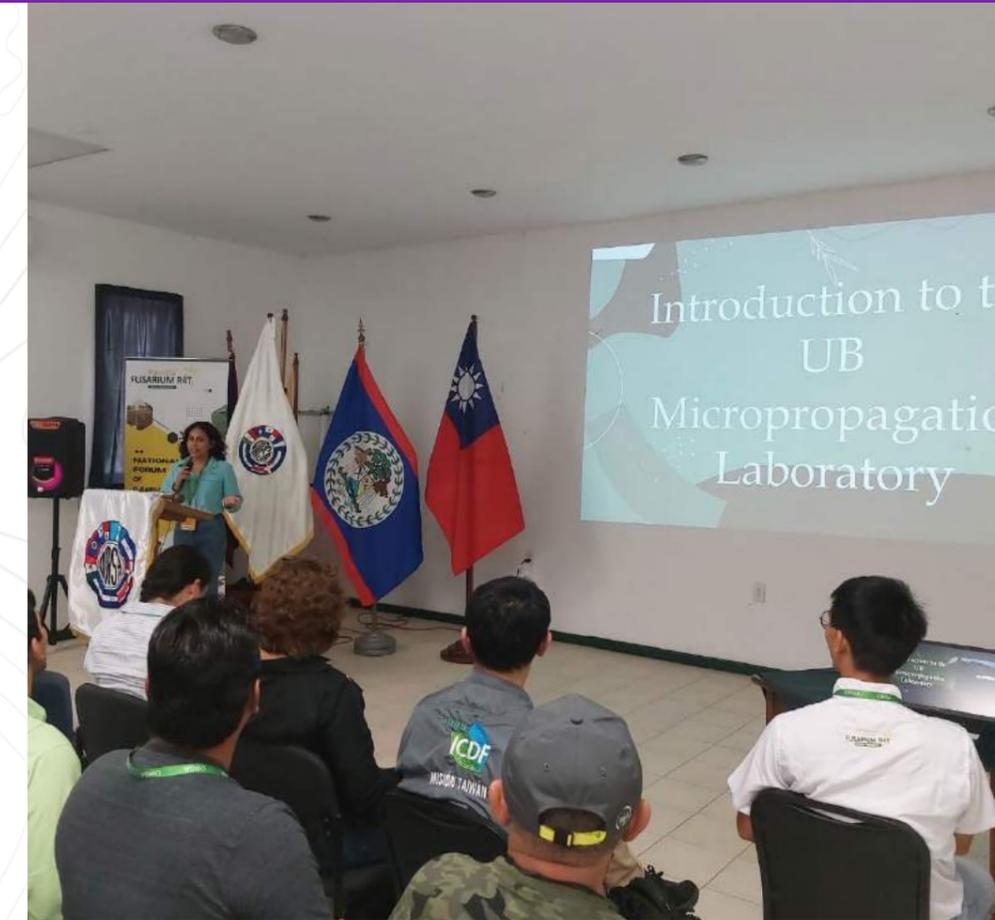
Thank you, Sheena, for your hard work and unwavering commitment to advocating for the rights and well-being of Indigenous and Tribal peoples in the Caribbean. Your dedication to these important issues is truly inspiring, and we are proud to have you as a representative of our university.

# THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE

## PARTICIPATED IN THE NATIONAL FORUM ON FUSARIUM TR4 SIMULATION EXERCISE



The University of Belize participated in the National Forum on Fusarium TR4 Simulation Exercise, held from June 27th to June 28th. This forum was pivotal in preparing the country for the potential outbreak of Fusarium TR4, recognized as one of the most devastating fungal diseases affecting bananas globally. The disease has been detected in Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru and it is only a matter of time until the pathogen reaches Belize.



During the forum's second day, the university contributed by presenting insights from our cutting-edge micropropagation laboratory. This specialized facility is currently working on advancing techniques for micropropagating TR4-resistant strains of bananas. The University's research and development efforts underscore our commitment to safeguarding Belize's banana industry against the threat of Fusarium TR4, highlighting their proactive stance in agricultural research and innovation.

University of Belize



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