# The Educational System of Trinidad and Tobago

AACRAO Annual Meeting March 25, 2008



- Island of Trinidad discovered by

7 miles off the coast of Venezuela

- Christopher Columbus in 1498
- Spanish colony 1594-1802 then ceded to the British
- Island of Tobago settled by the Dutch in 1630





- French colony for 33 years then ceded to British crown in 1814
- Slaves emancipated in 1838
- Contract laborers from India brought in between 1845 and 1917 to support sugar industry and cocoa production
- 1888 islands united as one colony
- Gained independence on August 31, 1962

### Country background

- Population 1,056,608 majority live on island of Trinidad
- Literacy 98.6% highest in Caribbean
- English is official language
- Caribbean Hindustani (dialect of Hindi),
  French, Chinese, Spanish also spoken
- 00000 Trinidadian students in U.S.
- Steel drum was invented in Trinidad



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- Based on British model
- During 19<sup>th</sup> century, education was primarily a preparation for upper class to continue studies abroad
- Early 20<sup>th</sup> century, public school system established and open to all
- Government-financed school related to religions on islands open



- 1970s: two-cycle secondary system established (3 years junior secondary and 2 years upper secondary)
- 1972: technical/vocational secondary schools opened
- 1975: new primary school syllabus introduced and fully-integrated by 1981



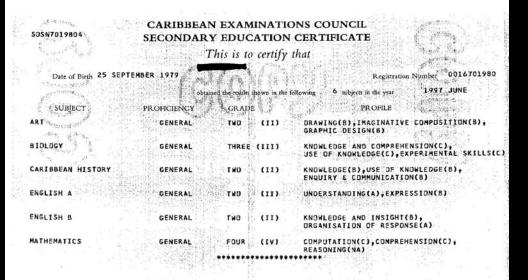


- Education is free and compulsory from age 6 to 13
- Primary school begins at age 6 and is 6 years long
- Common Entrance Examination



- Secondary school: 5 years (Forms I-V)
  - 3 years junior secondary
  - 2 years upper secondary
- End of Form V: Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC)
- Prior to 1972, students sat for General Certificate of Education "Ordinary" Levels

#### **CSEC**





THE COUNCIL WAS ESTABLISHED BY AGREEMENT BY FITE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES IN 1972. AND IS RECOGNISED AS THE EXAMINING BODY FOR THE AREA.



## CSEC Grading Scale

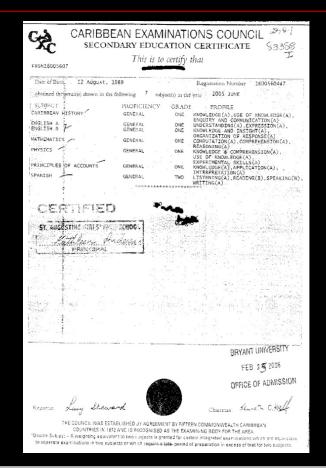
| Overall<br>Grade | Suggested US<br>Equivalent | Profile Description   |
|------------------|----------------------------|---|
|                  | Α                          | Candidate shows a <b>comprehensive</b> grasp of the key concepts, knowledge, skills and competencies required by the syllabus |
| II               | В                          | Candidate shows a <b>good</b> grasp of the key concepts, knowledge, skills and competencies required by the syllabus          |
| Ш                | С                          | Candidate shows a <b>fairly good</b> grasp of the key concepts, knowledge, skills and competencies required by the syllabus   |
| IV               | D                          | Candidate shows a <b>moderate</b> grasp of the key concepts, knowledge, skills and competencies required by the syllabus      |
| V                | D                          | Candidate shows a <b>limited</b> grasp of the key concepts, knowledge, skills and competencies required by the syllabus       |
| VI               | F                          | Candidate shows a <b>very limited</b> grasp of the key concepts, knowledge, skills and competencies required by the syllabus  |





- Form VI
- 2 years
- Choice of 2 examinations:
  - CXC Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE)
  - General Certificate of Education "Advanced" Level Examination

#### **CAPE**





| Overall Grade | Suggested US<br>Equivalent |
|---------------|----------------------------|
|               | A                          |
|               | B+                         |
|               | В                          |
| IV            | С                          |
| V             | С                          |
| VI            | F                          |
| VII           | F                          |





- Variety of post-secondary options
  - Technical and vocational schools
  - Career preparation institutions (ex. Trinidad and Tobago Hotel School)
  - Teacher training college
  - College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (CSTAATT)
  - University of the West Indies
  - University of Trinidad and Tobago
  - University of the Southern Caribbean





- College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago
  - Associate and bachelor's degree in technical and vocational fields





- University of the West Indies
  - Trinidad campus opened in 1962
  - Largest post-secondary institution on Trinidad and Tobago
  - Awards 97% of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees on Trinidad and Tobago
  - Admission requires 5 CSEC passes and 2 CAPE/GCE "A" levels
  - Accredited by Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)





| Grade | GPA | Marks % |   |
|-------|-----|---------|---|
| A+    | 4.3 | 86-100  |   |
| А     | 4.0 | 70-85   |   |
| A-    | 3.7 | 67-69   | First Class Honours 3.6 and above       |
| B+    | 3.3 | 63-66   |   |
| В     | 3.0 | 60-62   | Upper Second Class Honours 3.00 – 3.59  |
| B-    | 2.7 | 57-59   |   |
| C+    | 2.3 | 53-56   |   |
| С     | 2.0 | 50-52   | Lower Second Class Honours 2.00 - 2.99  |
| C-    | 1.7 | 47-49   | Third Class Honors 1.50-1.99 (BSc only) |
| D+    | 1.3 | 43-46   |   |
| D     | 1.0 | 40-42   | Pass (1.0 – 1.49)                       |
| F     | 0.0 | 0-39    |   |





- Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree classifications:
  - First Class Honours
  - Second Class Honours (Upper and Lower)
  - Pass
- MB BS, DDS, DVM degree classifications:
  - Honours with distinction
  - Honours
  - Pass





- University of Trinidad and Tobago
  - Founded in 2004
  - Result of government's goal of tripling postsecondary university enrollment
  - Bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs
  - Admission requires 5 CSEC passes and 2 CAPE/GCE "A" levels
  - Accredited by ACTT





| Percentage Grade | Letter Grade | Points Grade       |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| 90-100           | A+           | 4.0                |
| 85-89            | А            | 4.0                |
| 80-84            | A-           | 3.7                |
| 77-79            | B+           | 3.3                |
| 73-76            | В            | 3.0                |
| 70-72            | B-           | 2.7                |
| 67-69            | C+           | 2.3                |
| 63-66            | С            | 2.0                |
| 60-62            | C-           | 1.7                |
| 55-59            | D+           | 1.3                |
| 50-54            | D            | 1.0 (minimal pass) |
| 0-49             | F            | 0.0                |





- University of the Southern Caribbean
  - Affiliated with Seventh Day Adventist Church
  - Bachelor and master's degree
  - Not accredited by ACTT





- Teacher training
  - 2 teacher training colleges (now part of UTT)
  - Minimum entry requirement for primary school teachers: 5 CSEC passes
  - 2-year programs Teacher's Diploma
  - Certificate of Education one year, part-time
  - Secondary school teachers: Diploma in Education one year, part-time following Certificate of Education
  - 3-year Bachelor of Education (BEd) 1992
  - Master of Education (MEd) UWI, 2 years, part-time for teachers, principals, administrators, supervisors





- Resources:
  - Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education: <a href="http://stte.gov.tt">http://stte.gov.tt</a>
  - Caribbean Examinations Council: www.cxc.org
  - Trinidad and Tobago Training Agency: www.ntatt.org
  - COSTAATT: www.costaatt.edu.tt
  - UWI: www.sta.uwi.edu
  - UTT: www.utt.edu



#### Placement recommendations

- Common School Examination: place in grade 7
- CSC CSEC: completion of senior high school
- GCE A Level/CAPE: Each A-level/CAPE subject passed represents completion of the introductory sequence of that subject in the United States. Credit may be awarded for academic subjects on a course-by-course basis.
- Teacher's Diploma: Comparable to completion of 2 years of undergraduate study
- Certificate of Education: Comparable to completion of 3 years of undergraduate study



#### Placement recommendations

- Associate's degree: comparable to completion of 2 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.
- Bachelor of Nursing: comparable to completion of 3 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.
- Bachelor of Education: comparable to a bachelor's degree in the U.S.
- Bachelor Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery: comparable to completion of a first professional degree in medicine in the U.S.
- Doctor of Dental Surgery: comparable to a first professional degree in dentistry in the U.S.



#### Placement recommendations

- Doctor of Veterinary Medicine: comparable to a first professional degree in veterinary medicine
- Post-Graduate Diploma: comparable to a master's degree in the U.S.
- Master's degree (in any field): comparable to a master's degree in the U.S.
- Doctor of Philosophy: comparable to an earned doctorate in the U.S.
- Medical Doctorate/Doctor of Medicine: comparable to post-doctoral study in the U.S.