

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES**

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The UWI/Guardian Group Premium Teaching Awards Committee

Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)

Teaching and Learning Complex

The University of the West Indies

St. Augustine

Dear Awards Committee

I write to nominate Dr. Camille Huggins for the 2020 UWI/Guardian Life Premium Teaching Award. Dr. Camille Huggins joined the Department of Behavioral Sciences in the Social Work unit in July 2015. I was her supervisor, as the coordinator of the Social Work unit. From the very first semester, she demonstrated strong teaching skills and it was evident in her positive teaching reviews from the students. Through the many interactions I have had with her since then, her commitment to her students and high standards have continued to impress me. She has taught both under and post graduate courses. The undergraduate courses include International Social Work and Social Welfare, Theories of Social Work II and Group and Individual Counseling. The post graduate courses include Issues of Equality, Advance Social Work Interventions and Advance Theory of Risk and Resiliency. In each of these courses she has received positive student feedback.

Dr. Huggins updated the content of each of these courses with current, relevant material and fine-tuned her teaching and assessment approaches every time she taught a course. Dr. Huggins encouraged students to complete evaluations and incorporated their feedback into her teaching approach. Her focus is always on helping students to think critically and understand the material. Some of her approaches to teaching and assessment have included group presentations, online and in-class discussions, problem-based teaching with realistic case studies. She believes that she must meet her students where they are. Therefore, she will meet with students individually to help them with concepts. Dr. Huggins teaching and assessment reveal that students are her priority.

Dr. Huggins is interested in meeting the needs of the job market, so she meets with community stakeholders regularly and tries to incorporate their recommendations for a marketable social worker into the curriculum. One of her initiatives with meeting with stakeholders was to create a blended learning undergraduate course named Treatment and Practice for Forensic Populations, which has been approved by AQAC and will be available by Spring 2021. This course will provide the needed skill set to work with vulnerable populations such as children at risk and prisoners.

Dr. Huggins has over ten years of working in the field abroad, and she has brought her practical experience to the classroom to provide a real-world perspective. Her practitioner experience and her researcher skills were a welcomed asset in her collaborating with me to write the first social work textbook for the Caribbean. The Social Casework Methodology: A skills handbook for the Caribbean Human Services Worker which was published in 2019 is the first of its kind. This book is a pro-community and individual approach to social welfare and social work that is stipulated in the International Federation of Social Work Ethics. The text considers cultural beliefs, values, and traditions of the Caribbean people.

Dr. Huggins also pioneered a life changing post-graduate initiative with a student exchange program with Quinnipiac University (QU) in Connecticut, USA. In 2019, she bought three post graduate UWI students to Connecticut for a weeklong educational experience. Two institutions with burgeoning Social Work programs, Quinnipiac University (QU)  and the University of the West Indies – St. Augustine, Trinidad (UWI-SA) have an opportunity to shape both programs by creating a “world-sized classroom”, giving students and faculty access to social work practice and policy, and to social justice challenges, beyond their own community, and with our global neighbors.  Three students from the University of the West Indies-St. Augustine students had an opportunity to travel to Connecticut to gain knowledge of an established social welfare system serving diverse communities, to visit field agencies and community-based organizations. The students were able to participate in interprofessional education opportunities. It provided the students insight about international social work practice and the universality and specificity of social work skills across international settings. The initiative promotes global engagement through guest lectures, field site visits, and other learning opportunities for faculty and students around social work practice, local and global policy, and research methodologies.

Teaching has not been Dr. Huggins only contribution to the department work. She is collegial, approachable, hard-working, and supportive of the efforts and successes of the faculty. Dr. Huggins served as Deputy Dean of Planning and Programs for the Faculty of Social Sciences for the 2018/2019 school year under Professor Ann Marie Bissessar. During her tenure, Dr. Huggins assisted the then dean Bissessar with a one-day Domestic Violence symposium, which was well received. She also created a 40-hour training for summer 2019. The 40-hour training, the Essential skills for Forensic Social Work was held from June 3 to 7th 2019. There were 40 participants who were social workers and nurses from Children’s Authority, St. Ann’s psychiatric hospital, the Ministry of Education and medical social work. It was a great initiative that allowed access for continuing education for practitioners in the field.

Dr. Huggins is driven to better herself and to serve the wider community. She received a small grant from the International Association of Schools of Social Work to do a disaster resilience project for Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean communities. Prior to the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Huggins was set to chair the Department of Behavioral Sciences conference and she invited a notable speaker to discuss disaster resilience for the community audience. In addition to the Certificate in University Teaching and Learning that she earned in 2018, she also attended CETL and the Council of Social Work Education workshops to grow her competence as a teacher.

Dr. Huggins continues to distinguish herself as a lecturer here at the UWI, It is therefore my pleasure to nominate her as a suitable candidate for the 2020 UWI/Guardian Premium Teaching Award.

Yours Truly,

Emmanuel Janagan Johnson, PhD

Senior Lecturer, Social Work Unit

Department of Behavioral Sciences.