

**Caribbean Council for Higher Education
in the Greater Caribbean
(CACHE)**

Brief History of CACHE

The Caribbean Council of Higher Education in Agriculture (CACHE) is a nonprofit organization of educational institutions of higher education in agriculture, rural development, and natural resources in the wider Caribbean (including Florida). CACHE was created in 1996 as a result of a mandate issued by the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) Heads of Government to Inter-American Institute of Agriculture IICA and the University of the West Indies (UWI) to create a non-profit organization, committed to fostering human resource development for sustainable transformation of agriculture in the Caribbean. CACHE was officially registered in 1998 in Trinidad and Tobago.

The mission of CACHE is to promote cooperation among institutions of higher education in agriculture for enhancing sustainable agricultural development in the Caribbean, within the framework of the Inter-American integration process. To date, the membership consists of more than 30 institutions from 16 countries and territories within the Greater Caribbean region, including the state of Florida. CACHE's agenda focus on aspects related to:

- Quality and improvement of the educational programs for agriculture.
- Institutional strengthening through cooperation amongst institution members.
- Promoting and facilitating models and systems for self-evaluation and accreditation programs.
- Establishment of a regional program for evaluation and accreditation as well as training a cadre of specialist throughout the region.

UF/IFAS formally became a member of CACHE under Dr. David Sammons, (then Director of UF/IFAS International Programs) around 2008. Dr. Gilly Evans has attended meetings of CACHE since around 2010 and, upon being appointed the Associate Director of IFAS Global in 2013, was assigned the responsibility of representing UF/IFAS at such meetings. This function was recently transferred to Dr. Carlene Chase.

Benefits of CACHE Membership

This membership offers UF/IFAS the opportunity to:

- Strengthen our influence in the Region. Through the years, the University of Florida (UF) has remained actively engaged in the Region, undertaking a broad range of outreach, training, and research activities, and has taken steps to solidify its position in the Region as it continues its effort toward internationalization of UF by attracting more high-quality students from Latin America and the Caribbean
- Improve the agricultural and natural resources curriculums of the various member institutions.
- Foster student and faculty exchange. CACHE sponsors a faculty and student exchange every two years. The host country covers all in-country expenses, paid largely from the annual dues paid by members. This allows for cultural enrichment.
 - In 2013, a UF student participated in an exchange and her statement is attached.
 - At the 2014 meeting, UF hosted the first CACHE student and faculty exchange program. The week-long program entailed visits to agricultural and natural resource project sites throughout Florida, with emphasis on technologies that support sustainable development. This exchange included 20 overseas participants (students and faculty) from Barbados, Dominican Republic, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, US Virgin Islands, and the United States. Highlights of the trip are at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOjQ9bH4hWk> and http://youtu.be/ehxZ69_ckBl
- Recruit students: The forum also allows for the recruitment of some of the best and brightest students from the region (see attached "ad" created by Dr. Evans).
- Assisting UF faculty/students with their engagement in the Region: By being a member of this organization, faculty/students travelling in any of the countries are extended the courtesy including, assisting with logistics, transportation, desk space, providing contacts etc.

Summary of 2019 Annual Meeting

The 2019 Annual General Assembly (AGA) of the Caribbean Council of Higher Education in Agriculture (CACHE) was held on July 9, 2019. The mission of the Council is to “to promote cooperation among institutions of higher education in agriculture for enhancing sustainable agricultural development in the Caribbean within the framework of the Inter-American integration process”. The AGA occurred at the 55th Meeting of Caribbean Food Crops Society in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Twelve participants represented member institutions from Belize, Dominican Republic, Florida, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Several high ranking university and research institution officials were in attendance: Clement Sankat, President of the University of Belize; Jocelyn Louissaint, Dean of the State University of Haiti; Lawrence Lewis, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry; and Harry Ozier-Lafontaine, the director of research and the President of the INRA (French National Institute for Agricultural Research) French West Indies and Guiana Center. The University of Florida/IFAS was represented by Carlene Chase of the Horticultural Sciences Department.

Among the matters considered at the AGA was the 2020 student exchange program. The three participating institutions in Guyana have committed to hosting the seven-day event with plans to accommodate 25 students and three facilitators. A draft strategic plan was also discussed, and committees were established to review and develop the Communications, Finance, and Governance components of the plan in order to facilitate implementation. Dr. Chase was appointed to the Governance Committee. The Finance Committee also has been



tasked with creating a backgrounder that can be used by member institutions in their efforts to access funding for agriculture curriculum harmonization within the Caribbean. The AGA ended with a presentation by Thelma McCatty-Cover whose company – Calyx – has been developing textbooks and online materials for use in vocational agricultural training targeted to high school and community college level curricula that meet the requirements for the Caribbean Vocational Qualification. CACHE representatives are encouraged to participate in the CFCS meeting and thus Dr. Chase presented a poster on the results of research conducted on cover crops in Haiti by her former student, Jean-Maude Louizias, who graduated with a master’s degree in Horticultural Sciences in August 2019. The 2020 AGA will be held in conjunction with the 56th Meeting of the CFCS in Martinique. UF’s recent CACHE engagement.