

Professionalism

CTI's Fundamental Value

It's an elusive concept. You know it when you see it. You miss it when you don't see it. You demand it when you are expecting it but don't see it. And you should see it everywhere – occupationally, professionally, academically. It's a concept that can make or break careers, irrespective of whether you are the country's Prime Minister or the *planton* running around doing his errands. You've guessed it: **Professionalism**.



Here at CTI we define it, rather simplistically, as our ability to “conduct ourselves as true professionals, acting in a fair, respectful and responsible manner at all times, both towards our clients and each other.” It's one of our Institute's core values – if not **the** core value.

Sub-values

Its importance as a value becomes clear when one examines its components. Implied in this definition are the following sub-values:

- ☑ **Altruism** – our ability to put the welfare and interests of our staff and students first
- ☑ **Duty** – our commitment to service our staff and students to the best of our ability
- ☑ **Esteem** – our ability to respect each staff and student's worth and honour
- ☑ **Excellence** – our ability to exceed our staff and students' expectations

☑ **Integrity** – our wish to be as fair, honest and truthful as we can. This means keeping our word to our students and colleagues and never compromising on our values, even when it means choosing a tougher path

☑ **Responsibility** – our accountability towards those who trust us with their education

Beliefs

Values, as we all know, cannot stand on their own. If they do, they would soon run out of steam and lose their momentum. They need to be supported by a strong set of beliefs. CTI's credo outlines these admirably. Here's a shortened version:

- ✓ **Students:** We believe that our first and foremost responsibility is to our students - our curriculum must always be of the highest quality and must be delivered professionally
- ✓ **Staff:** We believe that our second priority is to our academic and support staff. We need to remunerate them adequately, give them security in their jobs and provide them with

just and wise superiors, as well as opportunities for advancement

- ✓ **Management:** We believe that our third responsibility is to our management. Our leaders must be professionals with talent, drive, education, experience and ability, and we need to support them as and when required
- ✓ **Community:** We believe that our fourth responsibility is to the community at large. We must strive to become good and professional citizens; participate in the promotion of civic improvement and maintain in good order, the property we are privileged to use

knowledge – the type we derive when we reflect on what went right or wrong after a particular event and what can be learnt from it, both as individuals or as an organisation

- ✓ **Caring.** Professionals care deeply about the business in general and their 'clients' – internal and external. They display a positive attitude which implies that they are here to assist and can do so
- ✓ **Clear expectations.** Because we strive to be professionals, we strive to communicate clearly our expectations and requirements so that all concerned – students, staff, colleagues – know where they stand

“Our students have over the years demonstrated a marked ability to surpass expectations and achieve excellence both academically and extramurally.”

- ✓ **Shareholders:** We believe that our fifth responsibility is towards our shareholders. Our institution must make a fair profit so that reserves can be created; our creditors paid on time and our growth nurtured

Attitudes

These values and beliefs must produce the right attitudes. A strong saying at CTI is “We all make mistakes – what truly matters are our attitudes towards these mistakes.”

Recently, we spent some time identifying the underlying attitudes that promote Professionalism. Here are those we found to be most critical:

- ✓ **Knowledge.** True professionals have a respectful attitude towards knowledge. They strive to obtain as much of it as they can and keep it up-to-date. And they are eager to see others around them, students and colleagues, acquire it in turn. At CTI, this knowledge is not only bookish but encompasses *self-*

Behaviours

At the end of the day, values, beliefs, and attitudes, must translate into action. The organisation and its people must be able to display behaviourally the professionalism it advocates. At CTI, we know that someone does so when he or she:

- ◆ Obtains and displays *specialized knowledge* and is thus on his or her way to acquiring a professional reputation
- ◆ Has a *high level of sensitivity* – is able to read people easily and react to them in a tactful and diplomatic manner
- ◆ Is able to *honour his or her commitments and promises*
- ◆ Is *not* attempting to hide his or her mistakes but takes ownership of them and does his or her best to fix them
- ◆ Makes a point of *being on time* – by respecting deadlines when showing up for work or when attending meetings

A whole issue devoted to one word, one concept, one value. A core value of our Institute, one we've spent 16 years conceptualizing, implanting and cherishing. Professionalism.

As anyone involved with setting up a new business or transforming an existing one would confirm, implementing a culture of professionalism is not a simple matter. Years of painstaking and repeated efforts allow us to inch our way towards the desired goal.

Here at CTI, these efforts began almost on the same day that our “business school” (as it was then known) was launched some 15 years ago. We knew from the word go that our fledgling organisation would stand little chance of survival and success if it failed to project a professional image. The odds against us were stacked high: we had no recognition from Government; relative support from our main partner (DCDM) at the time; moderate interest from an academic partner (UNISA) more suited to distance learning education; few qualified staff, and above all, little or no experience in actualizing our ultimate vision: the launch of the island's first private university.

The rest of the story belongs to the history books – the tale of Charles Telfair Institute has been dubbed this country's most remarkable academic saga and stands today as the leading example of what a private sector endeavour can achieve in the complex world of academia once it has set its mind and heart onto doing it.

Teaching Professionally - the how

Becoming a lecturer at a university is relatively simple. Becoming a true professional lecturer is something else though. As any seasoned academic would confirm, any budding academic would soon be confronted with thorny questions such as, What is my own philosophy of teaching? How do I continue to improve my knowledge and skills? How do I become part of a community of professionals and gain their acceptance and respect? And above all, here at CTI, how do I learn to treat my students as my customers?



The task ahead is immense. Think about it: the world over, academics have to design learning experiences that are integrated, logical and on-going. Such experiences need not only be consistent with the lecturer's own goals but are to be aligned with international delivery standards, assessments, and other reform initiatives that are supported by the best research evidence.

How did we do it? By using the time-honoured strategy of calling on "big brother" to assist! Through its association with world-class Curtin University, CTI has learnt, continues to learn, and will continue to learn for many years, from its partnership. "We are being groomed by the best," offers Odylle Charoux, Director of Academic Affairs. "And we are known to be fast learners!"

Pickings

And as any of our students, clients, visitors, guests would readily testify, the pickings from such an association have been both rich and plentiful:

High standard. "Learning from the world's best has been an incredibly enriching experience," confirms Vikash Rowtho, head of faculty. "I still remember clearly, some 17 years

back, our fumbling attempts at setting up the embryos of an IT faculty. It was great fun – but had we had at the time the support of an institution such as Curtin, we would not have wasted so much time and energy!"

Readiness for work. CTI enjoys today an unrivaled reputation on this island in terms of the 'readiness for work' concept. "Curtin's degrees almost guarantee that our graduates will find employment," assures Shaheena Chady, our Internship and Job Placement Coordinator. It is a fact that once employed their 'learning curve' is both short and sharp. They become productive almost right away."

International. Through Curtin University, our students have access to a truly international degree, one which will be instantly recognized and accepted wherever their career path takes them. It is not without reason that the Times Higher Education recently ranked Curtin 10th on its list of the top 100 most international universities. Another interesting statistic: almost a third of our partner's 51,000 students come from a country outside of Australia!



On Our Own

Relying on overseas expertise is all well and good – but can quickly lead to over-dependency if one is not careful. As in any other partnership, both parties must be able to contribute to the relationship. CTI is justifiably proud of its ability to innovate or to scan best practices and apply them to its own operations. The most noteworthy examples:

Quality and more quality. As alluded to elsewhere in this and other issues of *Chronicles*, CTI has an almost fanatical devotion towards quality enhancement. Loosely termed 'Zero-defect' this over-arching policy is seen and felt in many facets of our daily life, from the running of Quality Circles on an almost weekly basis to engaging into full internal audit or moderation exercises.

Continuous professional development. Strong emphasis is laid on the need for all staff to be life-long learners and accelerate their professional development. This happens not only at the formal level (i.e. in order for us to become AACSB compliant) but also voluntarily, as we acknowledge the critical task of upgrading our knowledge and skills continuously.

Continuous digital communication. Through the use of modern digital communication tools such as emails, Skype, Facebook, we keep in touch with our students' queries and needs, priding ourselves of a maximum of 24-hour turn-around response time.



A State-of-the-art Campus

Ask anyone who has been and who has seen – and he or she will confirm that the CTI campus is acknowledged as one of the very best in the country or for that matter, in the region!

The stats are impressive: 7 124 square metres of building on 7 acres of land situated in the very heart of the island, a stone's-throw from its cyber city. At the time of its inauguration some four years ago, one visiting journalist did not mince his words: "At a cost of

Rs250m, the building's most striking feature is the octagon shape of its auditorium. It is clear that the architects, Jean Michel d'Unienville Architects Ltd, have gone out of their way to ensure a harmonious whole within a specialized environment. Everything has been taken care of: spacious classes, meeting rooms, modern-tiered library, a digital one permanently connected to Curtin, conference hall, two cafeterias, kiosks, a child care centre and sport fields. Everything reflects class and professionalism."



'How implementing AACSB standards is making us more professional.'

In January of this year, CTI learned from its main academic partner, Curtin University, that it would need to upgrade its academic staff's qualifications in order to meet in full the AACSB staff sufficiency requirements.

For those not in the know, AACSB Accreditation is reputed, worldwide, as the longest-standing and most recognized form of professional accreditation an academic institution and its business programs can earn.

Launched in 1916, as the premier accrediting agency for Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degree programs in Business Administration and Accounting, it is the world's largest accreditation association for

business schools, with almost 1,200 members in more than 78 countries.

What does it mean for CTI?

Once Curtin secures AACSB accreditation, CTI, as its partner would benefit enormously. Our reputation would be immediately enhanced as we would become the only academic institution to meet the stringent quality requirements imposed by AACSB on Curtin's partners.

AACSB would also mean that CTI will further increase its research capabilities. As any academic would confirm, this will in turn ensure that our lecturers remain at the very cutting edge of their disciplines and increasingly contribute towards knowledge creation. And as we are aware, knowledge creation and dissemination is critical to the development of Mauritius as a whole.

And above all, it would imply that we would have become true professionals.



Facts about AACSB

- Established in 1916, AACSB International is a global, nonprofit membership organization of educational institutions, businesses, and other entities devoted to the advancement of management education
- It provides its members with a variety of products and services to assist them with the continuous improvement of their business programs and schools
- It does so by evaluating a business school's mission, faculty qualifications and contributions, programs, and other critical areas on a five-year review cycle
- There are 727 member institutions that hold AACSB Accreditation. Overall, 48 countries and territories are represented by AACSB-accredited schools
- Less than one-third of U.S. business school programs and only 15% of business school programs worldwide meet the rigorous standards of AACSB International accreditation

Graduation 2015

Two full graduations over two days, involving 503 graduands, 1200 parents and relatives, 30 corporate guests, 3 overseas dignitaries, 2 guest speakers, 85 staff members, 250 parked cars, and a splendid marquee! These were the formidable challenges CTI faced this year again when it held its annual graduation ceremonies on 16 and 17 April.



Prof. Nigel de Bussy, right, from Curtin University of Technology



Mrs Darshi Ganeson-Oats, left, from Challenger Institute of Australia



Hon Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Minister of Education, Human Resources, Scientific Research and Tertiary Education



Mrs Susan Coles, Australian High Commissioner



Mr Michel de Spéville, Chairman of Charles Telfair Institute presenting the DUX Award to Deeksha Susty

I remember...

My boss, HMJ

HMJ was my boss many years ago. I was 32 at the time and on my way to obtaining a doctorate. He was 51. My mentor. One day I invited him to deliver a closing address to a seminar we'd been running on Professionalism and Integrity. This is a summary of what he said:

"I have been listening carefully to all of you discuss Professionalism and Integrity and the need for us, in the medical industry, to be most cautious in our dealings with our patients and suppliers. I couldn't agree more! I believe that the following five points summarize marvelously well what has been said and to me, they epitomize the very gist of both professionalism and integrity." And he went on to list them out one by one on a flipchart:

- ◆ **Know thyself.** Self-knowledge is the beginning and end of everything. Every ounce of our energy must be spent discovering who we are as individuals, departments, or organisations. It is this very self-knowledge that will prevent us from acting unprofessionally and with dishonesty
- ◆ **Know your stuff well.** Whether we are selling medicines or potatoes, we need to know our products always and everywhere. Become an expert, a professional
- ◆ **Become obsessed with your client.** Always do your very best to satisfy your client, even if it means earning less. After all, without the customer, there is no professional!
- ◆ **Never make a promise you cannot keep.** Once a promise made, true professionals stick to their word – and deliver accordingly
- ◆ **Hold and display strong values.** Professionalism depends on our ability to adhere to the strict values of courtesy, honesty and responsibility when dealing with others. Learn to "walk the walk" by holding and displaying these values

HMJ concluded: "Integrity and Professionalism. May these two become your shining beacons and may they guide you and me as we progress along our daily paths. If we succeed, I can assure you that we will gain not only in self-respect but in others' respect as well."

Eric Charoux



Our Students

What about our students themselves? How professional do they think we truly are? How do they perceive this institute where some invest three to four years of their lives?

Recently, we put these challenging questions to them ensuring that we cover a wide range of criteria such as the general atmosphere, the lecturers, the curriculum, the level of support, the quality of the service, and so on.

The answers were invigorating – and confirm that we are on the right track. Here's a sample:

General atmosphere

"Everything, from the entrance to the lecture theatres themselves, reflects an impression of professionalism," offers Yannish Armoogum, BA Mass Com student. "It feels like home and yet it is not," he added.

Timothy Masuku, BA Graphic Design student from Zimbabwe, believes that "CTI is a reflection of an idyllic Mauritius where students of different ethnicities, countries and backgrounds are given the opportunity to instantly connect and share in the learning."

Campus

All respondents felt that CTI campus is above board with state-of-the-art facilities which include the very latest technological, educational and sporting facilities. "A campus designed for the young and a sanctuary for studies and commitment," is how Angelique Le Maire, BA Mass Com student, put it in her evaluation.

Lecturers

"We've heard of CTI latest progress via Curtin towards securing AACSB registration," comments Ashraf Bhatoo, BCom Accounting and Finance student, "and we are thrilled. We concur that our lecturers teach and deliver with excellence. They set no boundaries and go beyond what they are asked for. They are accessible, resourceful, and passionate. With such role models we have no other choice but to excel!"

Curriculum

"The contemporary and

international aspects of the Australian courses, the way the modules are designed, the research work, the continuous critical thinking required during the three years of the degree, all help to optimize the learning process at CTI," indicates Gaelle Dardanne, BCom Tourism, Hospitality, Event Management and PR student.



Professional Support Staff

CTI staff from our various non-academic departments, namely, Administration, Marketing, Finance, Human Resources, Library, IT Support, Child Development Centre, Maintenance and Security, constitute what may be loosely known as our 'support staff'. Their fundamental 'raison d'être' is to provide an array of personalized support services tailored to meet the needs of students and academic staff in general. As such they play a vital role in helping us come across as true professionals. What do we do to ensure that this takes place?

- ◆ **Quality always and everywhere.** From Day One, all support staff are brainwashed into the need to provide quality always and everywhere. Known as 'The Zero-defect doctrine' this core value is defined as our ability to deliver our services in as faultless a manner as possible and to do so right from the first. Over the years, intense efforts have been made by each support department to define this concept behaviourally and more importantly, to report on its implementation on a monthly basis
- ◆ **Learning.** Despite our emphasis on zero-defect, mistakes are unavoidable. When they do occur, a systematic process of observation, evaluation and learning kicks in which ensures that we do our utmost to learn from them. We refer to it as the "post-mortem process" and, provided it takes place rigorously, its learnings can be fantastic
- ◆ **Innovation.** Quality and learning alone will not suffice. They need to be supplemented by a constant ability to innovate – to find new or better ways of working. For example, at the beginning of this year, CTI innovated by investing into a 'Campus Management Software' – a programme which will enable us, once launched, to manipulate data with ease
- ◆ **Communication and teamwork.** With an array of eight major departments, it is critical that if we are to come across as professionals, any message is communicated clearly and succinctly and when mistakes occur we all chip in to try and resolve them
- ◆ **Training.** CTI has a handsome budget for the training of its non-academic staff. On a regular basis, staff are encouraged to undergo various academic and corporate workshops designed to expose them to the latest professional developments in their field.
- ◆ **Evaluation.** Any attempt at training or developing staff needs, of course, to be evaluated. CTI has in place a rigorous practice of evaluation, ranging from course evaluation questionnaires to customer satisfaction surveys, which are all ultimately linked to its performance appraisal process.



"Professionalism is something we take very seriously at CTI. I am very fond of this inspirational quote from Aristotle who once stated: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act, but a habit."

Natasha Sujeebun, Registrar Admin



Creating a Professional Culture

At the Charles Telfair Institute we believe that professionalism should be at the heart of everything we do. We also believe that professionalism is an important graduate attribute and one that is essential in today's competitive job market. As such Professionalism is not just one of our values: it's part of our culture and curriculum. From our directors to our academics, support staff and students, we are constantly attempting to come up with new strategies that feed this culture of professionalism at all times.



Collaboration with Industry: We work in close collaboration with industry to ensure that our students are exposed to professional environments at every opportunity. Many students undertake work-integrated learning assignments and work-related projects. This ranges from analysis of existing companies' published annual reports to launching of small businesses.

Student-led projects: Developing professionalism in our students starts in the classroom and extends to engaging student-led projects. For example, we have a strong team of "student ambassadors" who play a key role in many of our events such as our April graduations. Similarly, the 2015 Orientation saw 50 such ambassadors creating and implementing the various O-Week activities. In addition, CTI's Facebook page is updated every day by a team of Mass Communication students whose task is to communicate regularly with our 26,000+ *followers*.

Development: Finally, all staff are continuously encouraged to participate in growth and development opportunities. Accordingly, they attend conferences, run workshops, undertake their PhDs and participate in the Institute's growing research programme.



A professional Student Body

CTI has always promoted quality in all areas and, not surprisingly, our students have over the years demonstrated a marked ability to surpass expectations and achieve excellence both academically and extramurally.

Here is some of the most salient evidence supporting this statement:

☑ **VC List:** Throughout Curtin University, membership on the most prestigious VC List is recognized as a definite sign of academic achievement. Membership is granted at the end of each semester to the top 1% of undergraduates. In Semester Two of 2014, no less than 8 CTI students made the VC list - a record, given that only 33 students across the whole of Curtin worldwide achieved this

☑ **Awards:** This year, the logos, magazines, invitations, posters, polo shirts, uniforms, flyers for the COCAD athletics championship, have all been designed by CTI students. "They have a can-do

attitude", commented Gilliane Edwards, member of the Organising Committee. "I found them to be very professional in their approach."

☑ **Internships:** How does one explain that year after year, CTI is approached by a whole bevy of companies only too eager to offer internships to our students? "From the word go in 2005", commented Shaheena Chady, our Internship and Job Placement Coordinator, "this has been the case year after year." She explains: "I believe it's to do with the fact that most of our students are capable of behaving like true professionals once they reach their third year with us."

☑ **Positive feedback:** How does one explain too the positive feedback

CTI Media Support Team
with famous french sport journalist,
Patrice Montel of France 3 during COCAD 2015

received from our Interns' Industry Mentors, these very people responsible for supervising the smooth running of internships? "We find generally that CTI students have the right attitude. They are well mannered and well groomed when they come to us", observed the head of a large Moka-based training organisation. "They have good listening skills and do not hesitate to ask questions when needed or to push for additional work once they complete a task. Their presence and punctuality record during the two months of their traineeship was beyond reproach."



New Appointments



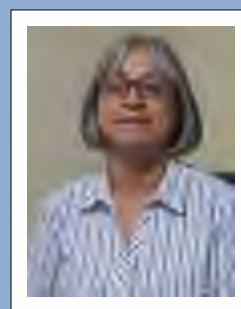
Chaitanya NIPHADKAR
Lecturer



Aleksandra PEEROO
Lecturer



Sanjeev GUNGADEEN
Lecturer



Jaimala RAMCHURN-QUILAN
Coordinator of Foundation Studies



Anne-Sophie NICOLIN
Caregiver



Audrey TROMPEUSE
Educator



Francoise PITOIS
Cook/Chef