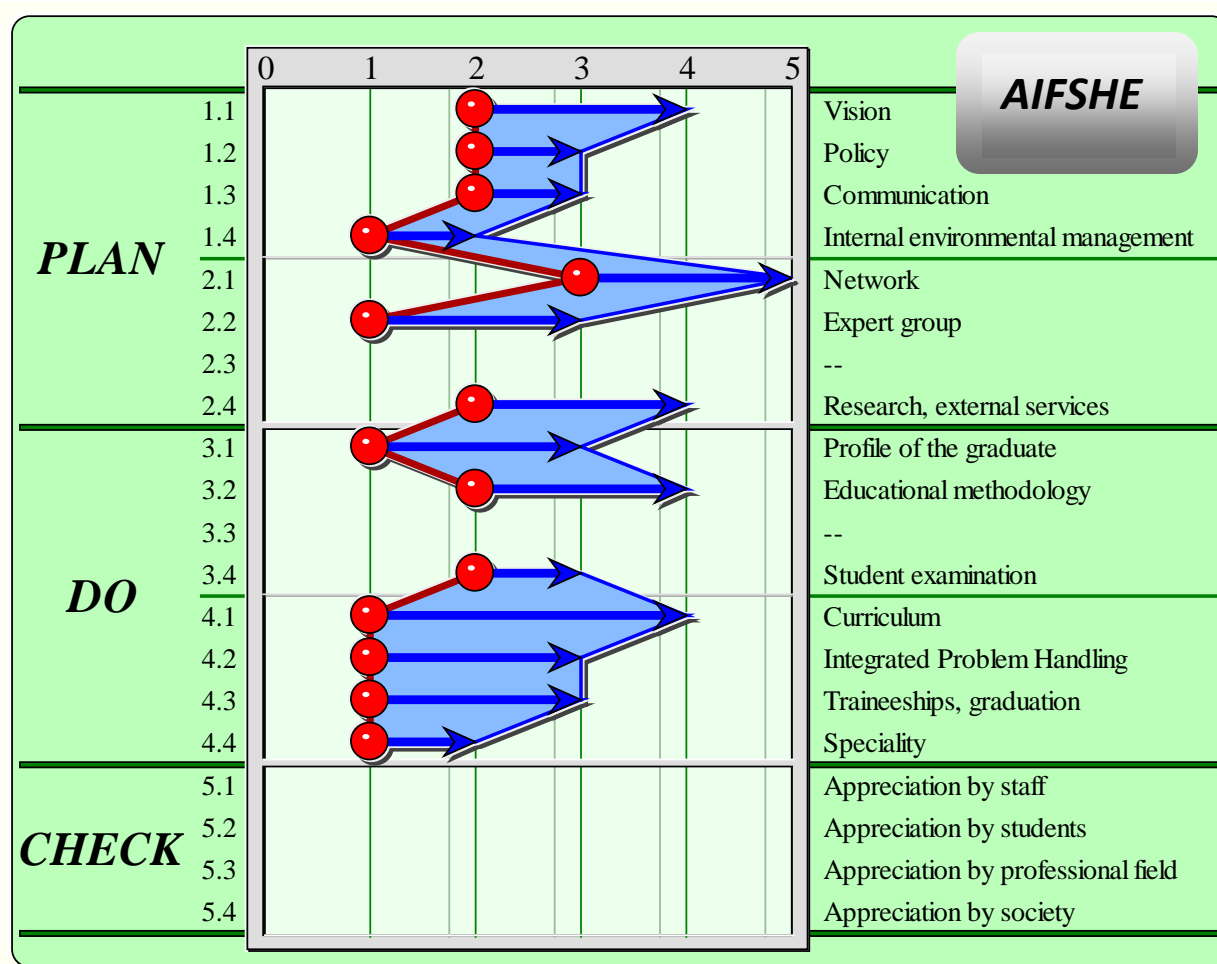


## AIFSHE Report

University	University of the West Indies at St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago
Department	Faculty of Food and Agriculture
Auditor	Dr Olivier Bello
Internal co-ordinators	Dr Hazel Patterson-Andrews and Professor Harjitsingh Rekhi
Number of participants	16
Secretary	Ms Melony John
Assessment date	28-02-2013
Date of latest assessment	N/A
Date of desired situation	2 to 3 years



The five stages of AIFSHE are:

- Stage 1: Activity oriented
- Stage 2: Process oriented
- Stage 3: System oriented
- Stage 4: Chain oriented
- Stage 5: Society oriented

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## === PLAN ===

### 1. Vision and policy

#### Criterion 1.1. Vision

##### **Present situation: Stage 2**

The students indicated that they have high expectations with respect to the vision of the Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA) on food security, indicating that the very name of the Faculty suggests some aspect of food security. This vision was confirmed in internal documents, such as the Message from the Dean of the Faculty contained in the Faculty's undergraduate booklet. It was also pointed out that a vision on food security had been explicitly developed at the time the Faculty was formed (by Chelston Braithwaite). The document was an important pillar in the formation of the FFA. The group indicated, however, that it was not clear whether the document was adopted or not by the University's Executive Board.

The Dean of the Faculty also indicated that this vision of food security had not been very well articulated, and that it has not been implemented so far, so this might be an area for attention. For this reason, the group decided that Stage 3 had not yet been attained, since the vision had not yet been expressed as a mission statement.

Students are involved in decision making in all areas and at all levels in the University e.g. Academic Board, Faculty Board, and Student-Staff Liaison Committee, where students can voice their complaints and concerns. Hence for Stage 3, the last item had been already achieved. Students expressed their willingness to be engaged in making decisions with respect to food security, as well as to be consulted for the articulation of the future vision/mission statement of the Faculty. Members of staff of the FFA are involved in food security issues in CARICOM (Caribbean Community), which has well defined roles and a policy on food and nutrition security.

Finally the group remarked that the Faculty would not want any Faculty-developed policy on food security to be too much out of alignment with the existing, regionally approved CARICOM policy on food and nutrition security.

##### **Desired situation: Stage 4**

The group is willing to reach Stage 4 if possible, as this stage appears to be the ideal, desired future situation. There are already some linkages to professional bodies. It was agreed that post-graduate students should be more involved with the preparation of a mission statement, more so than the undergraduate students. The goal is to achieve Stage 3 in 2-3 years, and Stage 4 within 3-4 years. Eventually Stage 5 should be achievable within no more than 6 years.

#### Criterion 1.2. Policy

##### **Present situation: Stage 2**

As with the previous criterion, there are student representatives on different committees and boards in the Faculty and the wider University, so they are also involved in decision making about policies. The group indicates that there is no single document addressing food security policy for the Faculty, but there are rather fragmented internal documents that make reference to food security. An initiative came from Barbados to produce a document on that matter and to participate in the formation of a Centre for Food Security and Entrepreneurship. The group also stresses the fact that there are institutional constraints with respect to changes in policy and policy making. For example, the University has a five-year strategic plan within which the operational plans of individual faculties must operate, which makes it difficult for this Faculty to come out with its own policy.

**Desired situation: Stage 3**

The period for short term changes is again considered to stretch over 2 years. The involvement of students and staff is already at a high level. Implementing the developed policy may be more difficult. The group were concerned that while some elements of Stage 3 currently exist, it is necessary to do some more work in this area before it can be concluded that the Faculty is in Stage 3.

**Criterion 1.3. Communication****Present situation: Stage 2**

Food security in education, research and operations regularly appears in Faculty meetings – formally as well as informally. There are international projects in the Faculty dealing with food security e.g. International Development Research Centre (IDRC)/CARICOM Food Security Project. The Dean is aware of how the staff members feel about food security. Food security is also mentioned in internal and external publications e.g. proceedings of meetings, the Faculty Newsletter, annual reports, proceedings of conferences etc. The group agreed upon the fact, however, that although everything that is done at the Faculty is related to food security, a lot of these activities are not explicitly labelled as food security.

The group recognised that Faculty communication about food security to the wider UWI staff could and should be improved, in order to make the efforts and excellence of the Faculty on food security issues more visible to other faculties, departments, research institutes and regional bodies.

Concerning external communication, the group indicated that external partners may not all be aware of the elements involved in food security and the Faculty needed to improve its interactions with other faculties of the UWI in this regard, as well as some external stakeholders, especially extension officers. It was agreed that an improved flow of information was needed to elicit feedback.

**Desired situation: Stage 3**

It was agreed that Stage 3 was achievable in a few months, since the first requirement was met. However, because there is the need to improve aspects of the second requirement for Stage 3 (i.e. the need for information on food security to be used to shape communication about food security), it was agreed that the Faculty should use available marketing and communication tools and approaches to improve its visibility and communication in the area of food security, especially with external stakeholders.

**Criterion 1.4. Internal management of food security****Present situation: Stage 1**

The group acknowledged the applicability of the statement ‘we don’t walk the talk’ in activities related to food. The Faculty encourages the use of local fruits in snacks used for Faculty meetings etc. but in general local foods are not promoted in catering establishments on the campus. While there are initiatives to recycle, these efforts are still quite *ad hoc* and not integrated into a Faculty policy. The present situation should be set at Stage 1 PLUS but certainly not yet Stage 2.

**Desired situation: Stage 2**

It was agreed that the Faculty should try to influence the food court within the Faculty to have more balanced meals.

## 2. Expertise

### Criterion 2.1. Network

#### **Present situation: Stage 3**

The staff have individual ties to local, regional and international organisations and many have set up their own networks, through Faculty, regional and international projects in food security. On the other hand, there is no clear mapping of the network or stakeholder analysis, so it remains unclear whether there are gaps yet to be filled.

The group pointed out that in the specific context of the Caribbean/CARICOM, only the UWI at St Augustine has an FFA. The University is charged with addressing the agricultural and food security related tertiary educational and research needs of the region, so this has also led to the formation of stakeholder networks by the Faculty.

The Faculty's curriculum is influenced by external stakeholders and other international tertiary level institutions and organisations with expertise in food security, which also provide the Faculty with feedback on issues related to food security (through the external examiner process, staff exchange visits etc.). Conferences are organised on a regular basis, collaborative projects in food security are undertaken, and workshops and lessons learned are brought back for inclusion in teaching and/or learning interventions. Some secondary schools have become a part of the outreach of the Faculty in terms of exchange of views and lobbying, in order to enhance the food security focus at an early stage of the education chain.

It was noted that the last line in the final item in Stage 4 should read "...and guest **lectures** are given" and not "...and guest **colleges** are given."

#### **Desired situation: Stage 5**

The Faculty is well on its way to Stage 4. The expectation is that the Faculty would eventually get to Stage 5, but this may require additional resources.

### Criterion 2.2. Expert group

#### **Present situation: Stage 1**

The group agreed that Stage 1 is most appropriate for this criterion since there is no established, dedicated group of staff members involved in educational development that is facilitated by the Faculty to enhance the promotion of expertise on food security. There were discussions in the past at the Faculty level to set up such an expert group with the objective of seeking grants for research in food security. However, with the presence on the St Augustine campus of the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), an already established expert group, it was not pursued as there were concerns about duplication of effort. The situation has now changed, as this Institution was merged with similarly aligned Caribbean organisations under one umbrella body and relocated off campus, so the opportunity now exists for the formation of, and implementation of activities of an expert group on food security within the Faculty, which can serve external and internal stakeholders.

#### **Desired situation: Stage 3**

The group recognised the importance for the Faculty in particular, and the UWI in general, to have an expert group on food security as a portal/interface with the external market, in keeping with its unique position, as the only Faculty providing training in food and agriculture at the UWI. It was therefore agreed that the Faculty should endeavour to get to Stage 3.

### Criterion 2.3. Staff development plan

This criterion will be removed from the instrument, as it has no direct relationship with the theme of food security (part of the fine tuning of AIFSHE within this pilot phase).

### Criterion 2.4. Research, external services

#### **Present situation: Stage 2**

The group agreed that the word “benefit” should be used instead of the word “profit” in Stage 2 and Stage 3 of this criterion and that the sentence should read: “There is a policy enabling the teachers and student education to **benefit** from the expertise acquired in this way.”

It was agreed that research has been done by personnel and/or students of the Faculty with international organisations. Also that expertise/research accomplished in the area of food security through Memoranda of Understanding with international tertiary level teaching and research institutions has contributed to the integration of food security in student and staff education.

In the UWI Strategic Plan 2012-2017 (page 11), mention is made of the establishment of a University-wide working group established in the Food Security cluster (among others), based on the perceived importance for national and regional development and the absence of a UWI Institute or Centre to drive research in this cluster. Research days at the postgraduate level are an avenue through which members of the academic community can expose members of the public to research done in the area of food security.

It was agreed that the first requirement of Stage 4 was already present, but not to the extent deemed necessary. It was agreed that more work needs to be done before attaining Stage 3 and that Stage 4 would be aspired to in the longer term.

#### **Desired situation: Stage 4**

The group indicated that Stage 4, although it is a strong ambition, might be more suitable for the Faculty in a long term perspective.

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## **3. Education goals**

### Criterion 3.1. Profile of the graduate

#### **Present situation: Stage 1**

The group indicated that within some of the programme offerings, such as marketing, agribusiness and human nutrition, food security is quite visible in some courses, but not in all of them. A focus on food security is not, therefore, set systematically and in the explicit way needed in the education programme goals to conclude that the Faculty currently operates in Stage 2.

#### **Desired situation: Stage 3**

The group expressed their willingness to make mention of food security more explicitly in the profile of FFA graduates and in visible career options.

### Criterion 3.2. Educational methodology

#### **Present situation: Stage 2**

The clear objective of the Faculty is to educate students to become critical thinkers. However, it is not clear how much reflective methodology is included in the curriculum at this time. It was agreed that it was necessary to first map what kind of reflection – if any – is done and where exactly this action is located within the curriculum. There is currently no formal structure to show such reflection, although the Instructional Development Unit of the UWI at St Augustine does encourage students to develop reflective attitudes, through well-structured learning outcomes contained in course outlines. The extent to which (and how) this is implemented in everyday delivery of courses is, however, an issue for discussion within the Faculty. Final examination structures also do not contain any incentive for student reflection.

#### **Desired situation: Stage 4**

There would be a need for a suitable feedback system. Time is a factor within courses and in large classes, to get that individual feedback from students.

The group stressed important constraints to the implementation of a reflective methodology requiring timely feedback, given the size of some classes and the need to redesign the learning outcomes in some courses on the basis of identified required competencies.

### Criterion 3.3. Role of the teacher

This criterion will be removed from the instrument, as it has no direct relationship with the theme of food security (part of the fine tuning of AIFSHE within this pilot phase).

### Criterion 3.4. Student examination

#### **Present situation: Stage 2**

Food security is more than casually mentioned in examination; it is part of the examination of core courses.

It was agreed that under Stage 2 the requirement should state, "...during delivery of the **curriculum**."

#### **Desired situation: Stage 3**

The group agreed to identify and/or develop at least one core course or basic module introducing food security, to be done by all students in the Faculty. Although the ambition is to reach Stage 3 in 2-3 years, the group indicated that it is committed to reach Stage 5 over a five-year period.

## **4. Education contents**

### Criterion 4.1. Curriculum

#### **Present situation: Stage 1**

The Faculty is at Stage 1, heading towards Stage 2.

#### **Desired situation: Stage 4**

In the short term, i.e. in 2-3 years, the ambition is set to get to Stage 3 with a progression to Stage 4.

### Criterion 4.2. Integrated Problem Handling

#### **Present situation: Stage 1**

The aspiration is for Stage 3 over 2-3 years.

It was agreed that the word "encouraged" should replace the word "gesticulated" in this criterion, so that the sentence would read, "...in which the student is **encouraged** to develop..."

**Desired situation: Stage 3****Criterion 4.3. Traineeships, graduation****Present situation: Stage 1**

The group indicates that although there is still work to be done to attain Stage 2, several conditions required for Stage 2 have already been met and it is realistic to have the ambition of achieving Stage 3.

**Desired situation: Stage 3****Criterion 4.4. Speciality****Present situation: Stage 1**

There are some electives addressing aspects of food security that are available for students to choose from at the undergraduate level. The Faculty is now seeking to introduce Managing Food Security as an option for the MSc. Marketing and Agribusiness programme.

Moreover, the Faculty currently has a graduate programme in Food Safety and Food Quality, with courses that have a strong food security content. Students are conferred with certificates, diplomas or MSc in Food Safety and Food Quality.

**Desired situation: Stage 2**

It is quite realistic to set the ambition to Stage 2 in the short term (2-3 years). Developing a certificate in food security, for example a postgraduate certificate, could also be a way to make the curriculum more attractive. All students in all programmes in the Faculty should ideally be exposed to a food security course. It was also agreed that the Faculty must decide on a proper food production degree that would allow for specialisation in food security.

Another important point raised by the Dean was the necessity of not moving too far away from the food production aspect within the Faculty; if that were to happen, the Faculty would lose the support of UWI and perhaps its major stakeholders. The key is therefore to look carefully and balance strategically the integration of food security as a specialisation within current programmes.

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***=== CHECK === This category does not fall within the scope of this pilot.***

