



NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Two astrophysicists and a mathematician headline STEM Carib 2012 Conference

STEM Carib 2012, Cayman's first ever Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Conference slated for Wednesday-Friday, October 17-19, 2012 attracts international heavyweights including astrophysicists Dr. Shirin Haque of the University of the West Indies (St Augustine) and Dr Ed Guinan of Villanova University, Pennsylvania, USA, as well as Dr. Claude Packer, a multi-awarded educator in the field of mathematics and current President of the Mico University College in Jamaica.

Considered an icon of science, technology and innovation in the Caribbean, Dr. Shirin Haque is the first woman to ever head the Department of Physics at UWI (St. Augustine), advancing the study of astronomy and inspiring many students, especially young women, to pursue careers in science. She has a number of stellar accomplishments under her belt, including her involvement in cutting edge research in Astrobiology, which is the interdisciplinary study of the origin, evolution, distribution, and future of life in the universe. The multi-awarded Dr. Haque is known for her passion for education, student-centric style and her forte, Science Popularization.

Edward Guinan, Ph.D., is a Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics at Villanova University. He and two colleagues discovered Neptune's ring system in 1968. His research interests include binary star systems, black holes, evolution of the sun and solar-like stars, pulsating stars, astrobiology, exoplanets and the suitability of exoplanets for life. He is a Guest Investigator on a number of NASA Astronomy space observatories including the Hubble Space Telescope, among others.

Because of his love of and commitment to the development of an understanding of mathematics in the wider society, Dr. Claude Packer's name has become synonymous with Mathematics education in Jamaica. His contribution to the field spans several years and generations. Many persons, young and old, owe their success in the area of mathematics to Dr. Packer's teaching and research. His involvement in all sectors of the educational system demonstrates his desire to demystify Mathematics, from the Early Childhood level to the Post Graduate level.

Joining these three keynote speakers are other local and international STEM experts who will be discussing a plethora of topics such as Math Phobia, Cloud Computing, Caribbean Hurricanes, Alternative Energy Sources, Mosquito Research, Engineering Turtles and Architecture as an Art/Science, to name a few.

"We are very fortunate to have attracted such illustrious speakers for STEM Carib 2012", said Dr. Bill Hrudey, Steering Committee Chair. "We are featuring some of the most sought-after experts in the field of STEM, and we are honoured that they share our vision in promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics learning within and beyond the classroom."

Dr. Hrudey also underscored that there is a need for the educational systems to place renewed focus on STEM teaching and learning, and to spark interest in these subject areas from an early age.

UCCI President Roy Bodden believes that advancement of STEM education is key, saying "We need to equip our students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to compete in the global arena and to confront the challenges of the 21st century."

STEM Carib 2012 is being presented by the University College of the Cayman Islands in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Training and Employment, UWI (St Augustine), the Caribbean Institute of Astronomy (CARINA) and the Cayman Islands Astronomical Society (CIAS).

The Steering Committee also extends its gratitude to the sponsors who are making this event possible. They are: Greenlight Re, the Ministry of Education, Training and Employment, UWI (St Augustine), Caymanian Compass, dms Broadcasting, the Marriott Grand Cayman, CUC, Kirk Office Equipment, Water Authority, Cayman Islands, GIS Marketing & Communications, the Department of Tourism and Sunshine Suites.

The conference is directed at teachers, parents, students, professionals in related industries the general public, with particular encouragement to the youth. The Opening Night on October 17, 5:30 pm is free and open to the public. Conference fees are \$50 and \$25. To register and for further information, please visit <http://stem.ucciconference.ky>.

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Notes to Editors

University College of the Cayman Islands

UCCI is an institution of higher learning that contributes to the Caymanian society by advancing knowledge and developing creative graduates, and through its cultural, social, economic and environmental activities. "We will admit all students with the potential and passion to learn. We will challenge students intellectually and prepare them for life in the global market place".

The goals of the University College of the Cayman Islands are:

- *To provide high quality education in career, liberal arts and transfer programmes;*
- *To encourage the maximum development of student potentials;*

- *To develop the competence of undergraduate students in basic skills;*
- *To prepare students in career programmes to meet the standards and competencies required for employment;*
- *To foster social and political awareness and involvement in the community through academic programmes and extra-curricular activities;*
- *To respond to the varied educational needs of the local community through a broad range of continuing education, career training and community service programmes;*
- *To develop new educational programmes in response to the economic development needs of the community in collaboration with the Cayman Islands Government, the Chamber of Commerce, and other local associations;*
- *To provide a systematic process of review that assures the realisation of the mission and goals of the University College.*

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