

Department Reports

President's Chambers



Ms. Juja Chakarova, Head of Library, Max Planck Institute in Luxembourg paid a visit to the CCJ to update the judges in current trends in records and information management. She also met with the team from the Library Unit to learn about the CCJ's own efforts in this area.

The term in review covered 1 August 2017 – 31 July 2018 and marked the final year of the Rt. Hon. Sir Dennis Byron's tenure at the Court and spanned the first few weeks in office of the 3rd President of the Caribbean Court of Justice, the Hon. Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders. Much of the work during the period was geared towards bolstering the institutional arrangements for APEX, increasing the quality of deliverables and completing judgments before Sir Dennis demitted office. APEX, is a special-purpose, non-profit, agency, that is committed to delivering technology-based solutions and services to support court ecosystems.

Judicial Work

The judicial work of the Court continues to be effective, with no backlogs, and has developed Caribbean Jurisprudence significantly. **During this year, the CCJ improved its video-conferencing capabilities to include a bridging solution where attorneys can appear at the CCJ by using devices that are connected to the internet, equipped with a video camera and a microphone.** This provides opportunities for attorneys to appear before the Court even if they do not have access to video-conferencing facilities.

The Court also showcased how quickly it could respond when cases are filed. In the matter of *Eddy David Ventose v Chief Electoral Officer*, which came in on a Friday afternoon, was heard on Sunday and a decision given later that afternoon. The Curia court management system played a crucial role in allowing the hearing in such an expeditious manner. The application for the appeal was sent to the CCJ after court hours and the Judges and Registry staff were able to access the documents remotely and quickly put in place the necessary arrangements to hear the appeal.

Notably, there was an increase of 32% in the number of cases being brought under the Appellate Jurisdiction which marks an improvement over the 20% reported in the previous year. Three matters, in the Court's Original Jurisdiction, were filed during this judicial year.

Speaking Engagements

The President of the CCJ has been called upon to address audiences at speaking engagements at various locations throughout the Caribbean and beyond. Among the themes explored by the President in his speeches were: the vision of regional integration, reform in the justice sector, accessibility, judicial independence, and accountability.

President's Chambers Continued



Former CCJ President, the Rt. Hon. Sir Dennis Byron hosted a delegation from the Bahamas including His Lordship, the Hon. Mr. Justice Bernard Turner; Attorney General, Senator the Hon. Mr. Carl W. Bethel; DPP, Mr. Garvin Gaskin and the Hon. Mr. Elsworth Johnson, Minister of State. The delegation came to review the Court's court management software, Curia.

Outreach

Sir Dennis Byron has, throughout his career, championed the use of technology to advance the judiciaries in the region. In November 2017, he convened the APEX Stakeholders' Convention in the Bahamas to discuss the greater use of technology to improve the quality and delivery of judicial work. Judicial officers and court administrators from all over

the region travelled to the Bahamas to participate in the consultation and to see how the use of Curia could impact court management in their own jurisdictions.

After viewing the Curia software at the Convention, a contingent from the Bahamas travelled to the Seat of the Court in June 2018 to meet with users at the Court and better evaluate the software.

A selection of judicial and public education events that the Presidents participated in during the year

The Rt. Hon. Sir Dennis Byron

- Special Sitting in his Honour in Antigua and Barbuda
- International Commercial Arbitration Conference in Guyana
- 16th Conference of Governors-General and Presidents of the Caribbean in St Kitts and Nevis
- APEX Stakeholder's Convention 2017 in the Bahamas
- Opening Ceremony of the re-launch of the Champions

for Change IV initiative of the Pan Caribbean Partnership against AIDS and HIV (PANCAP) in Guyana

- JamBarCLE's Annual November Conference in Jamaica
- UWI Cave Hill Seminar & Mediation and Arbitration Conference in Barbados
- Official meetings of the Directors of Max Planck Institute as well as the President of the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg

The Hon. Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders

- Special Sitting in his Honour in St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Special Sitting in his Honour at the CCJ in Trinidad and Tobago

Communications and Information Department

Ms. Charmaine Wright
Communications and Information Manager



The four Units that comprise the Communications and Information Department: Information Systems, Protocol and Information, Public Education and Communication and Library Services enjoyed a year filled with interesting projects and increased activities.

In addition, the work of the Departments saw a sharp increase as we supported one President leaving and the assumption to office of the 3rd President of the Court. The Department also marked the end of an era with the departure of the Chief of Protocol and Information Manager, Dr. Michael Anthony Lilla. Dr. Lilla had been with the Court since inception and was instrumental in the development of the CCJ.

The Department welcomed two new members, Lt. Col. Sharon Alfonso-Farrell, Chief Protocol and Information Officer, and Ms. Danielle McConney, Communications and Information Assistant.

Information Systems

Much of the year was dedicated to project management of the human resources management systems that will automate many of the processes that the HR Department is tasked with doing. This will have several advantages including reducing the amount of paper used in the Court, minimizing the number of people needed for the approval process and increasing the level of accuracy of information. The system has been rolled out to the staff of the organisation to a high level of approval. The Unit also finished a server upgrade project that completed a multi-year upgrade of the Court's technology backbone.

Migrating the payroll function, to existing software that

the Court already uses, is the outstanding component of the project. The IS Unit intends to complete this by the 1st quarter of 2019. There will also be some upgrades to the technology in the courtrooms to enrich the livestreaming experience.

Library Services

The team from Library Services is completing the Records Management framework for the organisation. The inaugural meeting of the guiding committee began a comprehensive review of the materials and approved the way forward for the project. The Unit is now working with individual units to refine their file plans, and is working with the Information Systems team on a pilot of the shared work spaces.

The Unit also continued to support the judicial staff, attorneys, researchers, and representatives from judiciaries around the region with materials from the Library's physical and digital collections. The Unit also contributed to the staging of the events that marked the end of the tenure of the 2nd President and the assumption of the CCJ's 3rd President.

Protocol and Information

The Unit benefitted from a comprehensive review of its policies and procedures as Lt. Col. Sharon Alfonso-Farrell began to refine the Court's airport facilitation procedures. After weeks of meetings with stakeholders, a new procedure has been developed and was successfully tested. The Chief Protocol and Information Officer also spearheaded a joint training session to ensure that all parties were fully apprised of the new procedures. The new procedures now provide a greater level of safety and comfort to our judicial officers.

Communications and Information Department Continued

The Unit also played a key role in the Special Sitting at the Court to mark the elevation of the Hon. Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders to CCJ President. The Unit was charged with ensuring that appropriate protocol arrangements were in place for the dignitaries gathered for the events. The Protocol and Information Unit also provides educational tours for stakeholder groups; these continued during the year.

In the 2019/2020 judicial period, the Unit will restart the CCJ Matters, an email newsletter that was used to share information about the Court, upgrade the quality of tours and will also host an Open Week to increase knowledge about the CCJ.

Public Education and Information

The Unit focused on the development of the content on social media platforms and audience engagement this year. The focus on social media has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of followers, which determines the reach of the information that is disseminated. Notably, the followers on the CCJ's

Twitter account have surged. In August, there were 1,368 followers in the CCJ's twitter account, @caribbeancourt, this increased to 2,001 followers by the end of July and continues to grow. Not only has the audience grown, but the Unit has also begun introducing new formats for content, including the addition of videos to posts and the live-tweeting of events.

The Unit has supported the communication of the livestreaming of the Court hearings, and judgment deliveries, from Courtroom 1 for over a year. In May, over 1,500 people watched the stream of the Ventose matter. While not all the broadcasts have such a robust audience, this is another way people are educated on the work of the Court and can prove as a resource for law students and other interested persons. In the upcoming judicial year, the Unit intends to embark upon a public education campaign it has conceptualised, upgrade the website and continue to implement strategies to increase the Court's social media content and presence.



Ms. Amanda Ramsaran (left), Information Systems Analyst of the CCJ, gave an overview of the HRIS system. Ms. Dionne Stephens, Executive Assistant in the Human Resources Department, was also a key part of the implementation team.

Finance and Administration Department

Ms. Andrea Callender
Finance and Administration Manager



Finance and Accounting Unit

The Finance and Accounting Unit manages the CCJ's financial reporting, payroll, administration of benefits, payments and communicates with external audit partners, suppliers, banks and other institutions to ensure the Court operates efficiently and effectively.

During this judicial year, the Finance Unit continued to provide timely and accurate financial information to key stakeholders, protecting the Court's physical and intangible assets and ensuring the Court's compliance with applicable accounting policies and principles. Over the year, the Unit embarked on the establishment of the automated payroll system that will work with the Human Resources Information System. Additionally, policies were documented for continuity and standardisation of work. A review of the records held in the Unit's vault was also undertaken to ensure they were being held in an appropriate manner and to ensure that they are compliant with the records management framework, which is being implemented, as well as, established standards.

Facilities, Office and Asset Management Unit

All the staff of the Facilities, Asset and Office Management Unit were placed together on the first floor during this period to create greater synergy and productivity among the members of the Unit. With resources of the Unit closer linked, several enhancement projects were undertaken during the 2017/18 judicial year.

These include a number of office renovations to create appropriate working spaces for the CCJ's staff, the

creation of a judges' deliberation room, increased office space for the JURIST Project and the repainting of walls in the common areas. The Unit also worked on projects to ensure the safety of the Court and those who work and visit the building, including working towards safety certification of the building. Additional smoke and heat detectors were installed throughout the building, security bars installed on windows and the Court's safety signage was increased in line with accepted guidelines. The electrical installation and electrical components of the building were also inspected and certified.

The Unit also worked to ensure the seamless transition of the outgoing and incoming Presidents of the Court. These included renovation on both residences, repairs to the official vehicle of the President and refurbishing the President's chambers.



Mr. Leon Gittens (left) of the Facilities, Office and Asset Management Unit receives a prize for being one of the employees who is an unsung hero.

Security and Logistics Department

Mr. Maurice Piggott
Security and Logistics Manager



Consistent with the Department's philosophy of the need to continuously strengthen existing systems and to seek to develop sustainable contemporary models, the Security and Logistics Department embarked on a series of initiatives during the period under review. Creating a safe and secure environment for the members of staff and users of the Court continues to be of paramount importance. Access to the Court's premises, although controlled, must also engender a feeling of safety.

To this end, an upgrade of the access controls within the Court was undertaken during the period to ensure that there is an accurate account of the number of people in the building at all times. To complement recent upgrades in the Court's access control systems, arrangements are being finalised for the procurement process for the acquisition of a new baggage scanner for screening packages brought into the Court and to assist in mitigating the entry of unauthorised or potentially harmful items.

The recent change in the leadership of the organisation brought with it the urgent need to realign the security infrastructure to facilitate the personal and residential protection of the President. This required the deployment of security officers and surveillance equipment at his residence.

Being cognisant of the demands placed on the Unit by the dynamic environment which exists, the identification of appropriate training and developmental programmes will be a focus for the upcoming period. Additionally, the Unit will be undertaking the installation of a state-of-the-art centralised alarm system. Once triggered by a smoke or heat detector in the building or manually activated in an emergency, all doors will be automatically unlocked allowing ingress and egress to comply with Occupational Health and Safety regulations in Trinidad and Tobago.



CCJ's Mr. Keith Gordon and Mr. Mahendra Bethune of the Jurist Project enjoy a sweet treat during the CCJ's annual Carnival celebration. The event offers an opportunity for integration with the surrounding community and to build staff camaraderie.

Human Resources

Ms. Susan Campbell-Nicholas
Human Resources Manager



During the period under review, the Human Resources Department worked assiduously to build its capacity to provide its services at an improved standard. The HR Team, in collaboration with the IS Unit, completed the project for the development and implementation of a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) comprising a human resources management module, an employee self-service portal and an integrated time and attendance system. These systems give leaders and employees greater access to employee information and human resources services.

The objectives of these projects, as stated in the 2016/17 Annual Report, were achieved in terms of significant reduction in the the amount of paper used, improved response time to requests for services, more readily available and easily retrievable data for timely and informed decision making and affording the HR team greater time to be strategic in supporting the Court in the achievement of its business goals.

Staffing

The capabilities of the Court were enhanced by the filling of the following positions:

Names	Position Title	Effective Date
Ms. Amanda Ramsaran	Information Systems Analyst	2 August 2017
Lt. Col. Sharon-Anne Alfonso-Farrell (Ret.)	Chief Protocol & Information Officer	18 September 2017
Ms. Danielle McConney	Communications & Information Assistant	1 May 2018
Ms. Kavita Deochan	Judicial Assistant	2 July 2018
The Honourable Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders	President	4 July 2018

The following employees separated from the CCJ during the period under review:

Name	Position Title	Reason	Effective Date
Dr. Michael Lilla	Protocol & Information Manager	End of Contract	30 September 2017
The Right Honourable Sir Dennis Byron	President	Retired	3 July 2018
Ms. Kerine Dobson	Judicial Assistant	End of Contract	19 July 2018

Human Resources Continued

Training and Development

Interventions were conducted as the Court continued to build the capabilities of the staff. In October 2017, two supervisors participated in a ten-week Supervisory Development Programme. In November 2017, the Chief Protocol and Information Officer conducted a workshop on Airport Protocol Services for 17 members of staff. From April 2018, all judges and employees were trained on how to use the employee self-service portal of the HRIS System. With the support of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, information

sessions on 'Introduction to Terrorism' and 'Introduction to Building Security' were held for 26 members of staff from the Court's Security and Logistics Department.

In collaboration with the regional law schools, the CCJ, under the leadership of the Honourable Mr. Justice David Hayton, Chair of the CCJ's Intern Committee, continued to afford students an in-service internship for three weeks. Six law students interned at the CCJ between May - July 2018, an increase from the previous year when only four students were placed.



Part of the thrust of this year's employee engagement was an increased amount of meetings to share information on what is happening in the Court and also to listen to the concerns of employees.