

# The University of the West Indies Orientation for New Staff

Social Welfare Training Center  
Wednesday March 10, 2004 at 8:40 a.m.

Presented by:  
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## **Introduction**

On behalf of the Association I bring you greetings and welcome you to the University family. It is indeed a pleasure to be asked to speak briefly with you about the Union.

The Mona Administrative and Technical Staff Association (MONATS), previously referred to as MONASA, a name that everybody knows, has been undergoing many changes, one of which is its Name. Over the past 30 years, the Association has been regarded as one for non-academic staff. There were undertones associated with the word “Non-academic” within an academic environment and this affected the way this category of staff was viewed and treated. In light of this, representation was made by the non-academic staff Unions of the three campuses (Cave Hill, Mona and St. Augustine), through a Proposal, to the University authorities, which resulted in a decision taken by the University Council on April 24, 1998 to refer to this category of staff as “**administrative, technical and service staff**”. The Union applauded the Council’s decision and was anxious to officially change its name. However, it was not until January of this year, that the registered nomenclature became “**Mona Administrative and Technical Staff Association (MONATS)**”.

## **About MONATS**

MONATS is the bargaining unit under which the rights of employees categorised as administrative and technical staff are represented. MONATS has the bargaining rights on behalf of these employees as it relates to pay, other benefits and the general terms and conditions of service.

I will now try to address some anticipated questions:

## **1. How does MONATS represent staff?**

### **(a) MONATS represents staff through Negotiation**

MONATS negotiates biennial agreements with the University, the last of which was the 2002 to 2004 bargaining Agreement (each employee would have received a copy last year, if not, please ask your departmental representative or any other member of the Executive Council for a copy). The agreement will give you an idea of some of the items of claim that the union negotiates behalf of staff.

### **(b) MONATS represents staff through Committees**

MONATS represents employees on all major University and Campus Committees such as the University Council, Campus Council and Finance and General Purposes Committee. Other campus related committees such as Grounds and Buildings Committees, and ad hoc committees such as those related to reclassification of positions, grievances and a host of others. Grievances, or unresolved disputes between staff and supervisor, you should note, are dealt with in accordance with the established procedures contained in the “Blue Book”, that is, the Terms and Conditions of Service for Administrative, Clerical and Technical Staff.

### **(c) Last but by no means least, MONATS represents staff through Dialogue**

MONATS encourages dialogue, which usually helps to reduce conflicts by extension enhancing the relationship between management personnel and employees.

## **2. How is MONATS constituted?**

MONATS has an Executive Council, which is elected **by Vote** at the Annual General Meeting. The Executive Committee comprising of the departmental representatives and the Officers, meets on the first Tuesday of each Month. The Council is comprised of the President, two Vice-Presidents, General Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and a Trustee. The current President is Mr. Patrick Thwaites (*please see circulated brochure for further information on the Executive Council*). There are also several departmental representatives which are selected in geographical zones by the constituents of those zones.

### **3. How can one become a member?**

Membership in MONATS requires that you complete a **membership application form** (I have copies or you can obtain these from your representatives). All staff in the category can apply for membership irregardless of employment status (i.e. whether you are a temporary or permanent employee). Membership dues is currently **JS150 per month** payable through salary deduction.

### **4. What are the Benefits of Obtaining Membership**

Not only will membership guarantee that you are represented by the Union, especially in times of disputes), but, there are financial services offered to members such as book grant, technology loan, car and house loan among others, some of which are accessible **only** by paid-up members. (In some cases you have to be a member for at least 3 years). We encourage you to apply for membership. Both the car and house loans are administered by the UWI & Community Cooperative Credit Union.

### **MONATS as a Monitoring Agent**

I would like to point out to you that not only does MONATS monitor the University's conformity to the agreed terms and conditions of service but it works closely with the Human Resources Division to arrive at compromises where these are absolutely necessary and/or are in the best interest of the employees. *So for instance, **one of the rules is that vacant positions are advertised.** The HR Division could make representation to the Union on the recommendation of a head of department to have the position filled without recourse to advertisement. The Union often accedes to such requests, especially where the employee appears suitable for appointment, is performing satisfactorily, and/or has been acting, or has been temporarily assigned in the position for extended period(s).* **So, the Union is not an inflexible body but rather one that believes in dialogue and negotiations.**

## **Conclusion**

In concluding, I would like to assure you that MONATS' main objective is to work collaboratively with the University Management to achieve the best of everything for you:

- ◆ the **best** negotiated salary package
- ◆ the **best** solution to disputes
- ◆ the **best** management/staff relationship.
- ◆ MONATS works in the **best interest** of its members.

**On a final note**, I would like to use this opportunity to let you know that the Association will be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year, a milestone which will be marked in a week of celebrations **June 6-12**. All are invited. The brochure circulated has a draft programme of activities. If you have any suggestions, questions or comments, please communicate with us via our email address at [monaats@uwimona.edu.jm](mailto:monaats@uwimona.edu.jm). Also, please look out for the launch of the MONATS website during the next few months.

Thank you.

**Any questions?**