

## Portal Opens for TT Scientists and their Research

In a move to advance local research and development (R&D) and innovation, the Ministry of Science and Technology, through its line agency, NIHERST launched the national science and technology research database, STRResearchTT, on 27 May at the International Waterfront Centre in Port-of Spain.

STRResearchTT is a key aspect of the country's STI infrastructure, facilitating greater collaboration among scientists, research institutions, the productive sector and civil society, therefore stimulating local innovation and scientific achievement. It will provide access to biodata on Trinidad and Tobago researchers and their research interests in an effort to give greater visibility to the capacities of research professionals, and to stimulate more interdisciplinary research efforts – nationally and internationally. STRResearchTT will also document the research activities undertaken by public and private institutions in Trinidad and Tobago.

Speaking on behalf of Dr. the Honourable Rupert Griffith, Minister of Science and Technology, Ms. Lisa Ann Phillips, Permanent Secretary (Ag.) in the Ministry of Science and Technology, spoke of the significance of NIHERST's work on the database, stating that, "As we expand and improve our knowledge in various sectors...to create a more diversified economy and enhance productivity and competitiveness, we must rely on the work which has been done and is being done by scientists and researchers." Dr. Ulrich Thiessen of the Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, commended the project, expressing the European Union's hope that the database would "contribute to new research activities with peers in the Caribbean, the EU and worldwide" as well as help to identify and overcome current weaknesses in the Research and Development sector.

## T&T sends three interns to NASA Ames

Trinidad and Tobago is making a name for itself in the world of science, and at NASA, as three trail-blazing science students from this country head off to participate in the NASA International Internship 2015 program. The 10-week internships are tenable at the prestigious NASA Ames Research Centre in Silicon Valley, California. Mr. Inzamam Rahaman, a computer science undergraduate at The University of the West Indies, will work on JAVA coding for NASA's World Winds project. Ms. Asher Williams, a graduate scholar from New York University, will conduct research on advanced microbial strategies for the production of nutrients

within crewed spacecraft and habitats. Mr. Stefan Hosein, who excelled during his internship in 2014, is returning on the invitation of NASA Ames to continue his research on biologically inspired machine learning.

This opportunity for exposure to the latest advancements in STEM fields will redound to the benefit of our country when they return to share their knowledge and ideas with others, and embark on R&D efforts of their own or in collaboration with international peers they met at NASA.



Rondell Liverpool, Projects Assistant with NIHERST (left), demonstrates the use of the database portal on the NIHERST website. Once registered, researchers, and institutions will be able to create, manage and update their profiles on the database.



NIHERST presents tokens to the first local researchers to join the database. From left: Jordan Millar, Lead Chemist at Universal Chemicals Ltd; Lisa Phillips, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology; Prof. Prakash Persad, Chairman of NIHERST; and Radhika Mamchan, Agricultural Officer I, Research Division, Ministry of Food Production



Officials say "Bon Voyage" to NASA 2015 intern Inzamam Rahaman. From left: Acting Permanent Secretary Lisa Phillips; Inzamam Rahaman; Chairman Prof. Prakash Persad; Stephen Weekes, Public Affairs Officer, US Embassy in Port of Spain; and Joycelyn Lee Young, Acting President, NIHERST