

Students, faculty travel to Caribbean to study history, culture

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 02/20/2019

President Tuajuanda C. Jordan was hosted by Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda, in Antigua Nov. 5-6, 2018. Here she is pictured with His Excellency (center), Lady Williams (left), and Barbara Paca, O.B.E., cultural envoy (right).

St. Mary's City, Md.) Tuesday, February 19, 2019 - Several students and two faculty are traveling to the West Indies this week for the Antigua and Barbuda Governor General's Seminar on Historic Preservation as part of a recent partnership between St. Mary's College of Maryland and the Office of the Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda.

Ellen Kohl, assistant professor of environmental studies, and Emily Casey, assistant professor of art history, along with four first-year students participating in a pilot integrated inquiry program connecting several general education studies to the theme of resistance, rebellion and liberation, arrived in Antigua on Feb. 15 for the week-long seminar.

Students and faculty will study the history and heritage of the island nation including archaeology, traditional building methods, historic conservation, therapeutic gardening, prison rehabilitation. They will also learn about drafting an economic and environmentally sustainable plan for the Government House Restoration Initiative as a model of Caribbean historic preservation.

A partnership between the College and Antigua and Barbuda, spearheaded by Maryland Secretary of State John C. Wobensmith, began last year when Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General, visited the St. Mary's College campus. His Excellency connected with students, faculty, and staff to initiate a partnership with the College to provide cultural exchange, including student internships and other opportunities for collaboration. During the visit, the Governor General gave a presentation on Antigua, Barbuda, the Government House Restoration Initiative, and charitable work led by his wife, Lady Sandra Williams.

Shortly after His Excellency's visit, St. Mary's College President Tuajuanda C. Jordan was hosted by Sir Rodney Williams in Antigua. While there, His Excellency shared that it is his hope that the faculty and staff of the College as well as the Government House Restoration Initiative would benefit significantly from each other.

The Government House, located in St. John's (Antigua's capital city), is the official residence of the Governor General. The house and its surrounding property date back to the 19th century. The property and the house hold a legacy of slavery.

Casey said the opportunity to participate in the seminar allows students to see directly how memory and preservation of past histories and places related to colonialism and slavery happen in a particular environment.

"It's an invaluable opportunity to get to expose my students to places where the things they are learning in the classroom are happening," Casey said.

The St. Mary's College group will also have an opportunity to meet His Excellency, Sir Rodney Williams, Lady Williams, Cultural Envoy Dr. Barbara Paca, O.B.E., and distinguished guests.

According to information from the World Monuments Fund, The 2018 World Monuments Watch called attention to the Government House and the restoration program as an opportunity to connect heritage solutions with issues of urban deprivation, health, and other social issues.

While in Antigua and Barbuda, students and faculty will take part in the World Watch celebration.

They will also help with preparations for the Antigua and Barbuda Pavilion for the Venice Biennale, titled "Find Yourself: Carnival and Resistance."

According to information provided by Paca, curator for the Antigua and Barbuda Pavilion, "For this island nation, the development of the religious tradition of Carnival into an act of resistance remains true in modern festivals. With the pageantry of costumes, parades, resolute songs, and dances, Carnival has been the manifestation of defiance from its inception as a slavery and post abolition phenomenon to the present day."

St. Mary's College of Maryland is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education through 2024-2025. St. Mary's College, designated the Maryland state honors college in 1992, is ranked one of the best public liberal arts schools in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. Approximately 1,600 students attend the college, nestled on the St. Mary's River in Southern Maryland.

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