

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES CURRICULUM.
ROLE OF THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING IN DISASTER
PREVENTION

by

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BACKGROUND

The University of the West Indies has been at the centre of disaster management in the Caribbean ever since the assimilation of the Seismic Research Unit (SRU) and the launching of the Faculty of Engineering on the St. Augustine Campus in 1961. But this is not to diminish its contribution to the field of disaster prevention by the Mona Campus before or by other facilities on all the three campuses since.

The Seismic Research Unit continued its work of collecting data, analysing and disseminating information, conducting research, issuing warnings and assisting in recovery after vulcanic eruptions and seismic episodes. But it was the Faculty of Engineering, in particular the Department of Civil Engineering, that was to naturally plunge deep in the question of disaster prevention. It should be pointed out that even here the initial thrust was not in disaster prevention per se but rather in the application of engineering science and technology in attempting to resist the forces of nature.

At this juncture it would be instructive to note that when we speak today of disasters management we must use as the framework a wider vision which includes Natural Disasters, Man-Made Disasters and Epidemics. (See Fig.1).