



REPORT OF THE TERTIARY COMMITTEE TO THE 62nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AUGUST 17-19, 2026

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

General Council Members

- Dr. Maureen Mullings-Nelson – Chairman
- Dr. Kenene Senior-Smith
- Mrs. Jessica Scarlett

Co-opted Members

- Mrs. Teasha Martin-Thorne – Excelsior Community College
- Mrs. Jolette Russell – G.C. Foster College
- Dr. Sasha Shim-Hue- Heart Trust NTA

Ex-Officio Members

Officers

- Mr. Mark Malabver – President
- Ms. La Sonja Harrison – President Elect
- Dr. Mark Smith – Immediate Past President

Staff Serving the Committee

- Ms. Petal Thompson – Regional Officer

PRESIDENT’S MANDATE FOR THE CONFERENCE YEAR 2025-2026

In addition to the aforementioned mandate in the Association’s Memorandum and Articles of Association, the President requested of the Committee members to undertake the following activities for the Conference Year 2025-2026:

1. Organizing forums on the future of teacher training institutions in Jamaica within the context of global realities
2. Arrange a meeting with lecturers at the tertiary level institutions with the President, Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General to hear the concerns of the members. tertiary lecturers to identify concerns.
3. In collaboration with President, Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General, take the necessary steps to address those concerns identified by members of the tertiary sector
4. In collaboration with membership, do a drive to recruit members in the tertiary sector to the Jamaica Teachers’ Association.
5. Review the recommendations in the Patterson report concerning tertiary education and prepare a position paper to be presented to General Council.
6. Discuss and make recommendations on how to improve teacher quality at the teacher training institutions. Supporting improvements in teacher quality and programme alignment.
7. Submit and present written reports to General Council on November 2025, March 2026 and June 2026
8. Present a written report to the JTA 62nd Annual Conference on or before July 1, 2026

MEETINGS, online via Zoom platform

October 12, 2025	ZOOM
February 20, 2026	ZOOM
March 8, 2026	ZOOM
June 18, 2026	ZOOM

COMMUNICATION AMONG MEMBERS

Throughout the committee year, communication among members was facilitated primarily through a dedicated WhatsApp group, which served as an efficient platform for sharing meeting

notices, agendas, documents, reminders, updates, and other committee-related information. The group enhanced collaboration, enabled timely dissemination of information, and fostered continuous engagement among members between scheduled meetings.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

During the conference year (September 2025 – July 2026), the Tertiary Committee implemented a number of strategic initiatives designed to strengthen engagement with stakeholders, identify sector priorities, and advance discussions on issues affecting tertiary education in Jamaica.

1. Stakeholder Engagement and Planning Meetings

The Committee successfully convened two national stakeholder forums that provided opportunities for meaningful dialogue among tertiary educators, institutional leaders, and the leadership of the Jamaica Teachers' Association.

2. Virtual Stakeholder Forum – Tertiary Lecturers

The Committee hosted its first national stakeholder forum on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, via a virtual platform under the sub-theme:

"Strengthening Teaching, Leadership, and Policy Alignment for Sustainable Tertiary Development."

The forum brought together lecturers from across the tertiary sector to discuss the major challenges affecting higher education, including teaching and learning conditions, staff welfare, institutional sustainability, quality assurance, and national policy. The session featured active engagement from the JTA President, Mr. Mark Malabver, who interacted directly with participants and responded to issues raised by colleagues. He was supported by the President-Elect, Mrs. La Sonya Harrison, and Deputy Secretary General Mr. Clayton Hall, whose contributions enriched the discussions and demonstrated the Association's commitment to the tertiary sector.

The recommendations emerging from this engagement informed the planning of the subsequent leadership forum. Some of the recommendations are listed below:

- **Leave Entitlements:** The need for clear, equitable, and consistently applied leave provisions for academic staff across tertiary institutions.
- **Qualification Allowances:** The need for appropriate financial recognition of advanced qualifications, particularly Master's and Doctoral degrees.
- **Higher Education Policy:** The importance of a comprehensive national Higher Education Policy to guide governance, quality, funding, accountability, and development of the sector.
- **Administrative Responsibilities:** The need for clear recognition, definition, and appropriate compensation for the additional administrative responsibilities undertaken by academic staff.
- **Student Assessment:** The need to review assessment practices to ensure they remain relevant, equitable, efficient, and responsive to contemporary teaching and learning.
- **Artificial Intelligence and Technology:** The importance of integrating AI and emerging technologies into teaching, learning, assessment, research, and institutional operations while establishing appropriate ethical guidelines.
- **Funding:** The urgent need for sustainable and diversified funding models to support institutional development, research, infrastructure, technology, staff development, and student success.

3. Tertiary Leaders' Forum

Building on the lecturers' consultation, the Committee convened a high-level Tertiary Leaders' Forum on Monday, March 9, 2026, at the JTA Head Office, under the theme:

"Reimagining Teacher Preparation: Positioning Jamaica's Teacher Training Institutions for a Global Future."

The forum brought together principals and senior representatives from Jamaica's teacher education institutions, including:

- The Mico University College
- The Moneague College
- Shortwood Teachers' College

- St. Joseph's Teachers' College
- Church Teachers' College
- Sam Sharpe Teachers' College
- G.C. Foster College
- Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts

The discussions focused on the future of teacher education, institutional sustainability, innovation, curriculum responsiveness, and strengthening Jamaica's competitiveness within the global higher education landscape. The programme was further enriched by a keynote presentation delivered by Dr. Maurice Smith, while stakeholder discussions were expertly facilitated by Mr. Howard Isaacs. The programme was further enriched by a keynote presentation delivered by Dr. Maurice Smith, with stakeholder discussions expertly facilitated by Mr. Howard Isaacs. Several salient issues and recommendations emerged from the presentations and ensuing dialogue, including:

- **Flexible Programme Pathways:** The need to reduce the length of time required to complete tertiary programmes through flexible delivery, improved course scheduling, recognition of prior learning, and alternative pathways.
- **Stackable Credentials:** Greater use of micro-credentials, short courses, certificates, and other stackable qualifications that allow learners to progressively build towards diplomas and degrees.
- **Special and Inclusive Education:** The need to strengthen special education within the higher education sector, both in the preparation of professionals and in providing appropriate support for students with diverse learning needs.
- **Sustainable Funding:** The importance of addressing financial challenges through diversified funding, strategic partnerships, grants, research, consultancy, innovation, and stronger industry collaboration.
- **Research for Impact:** A call for more relevant and applied research that responds to institutional and national challenges, informs policy and practice, and contributes to Jamaica's development.
- **Technology and Artificial Intelligence:** The urgency for tertiary institutions to respond to technological advancements and AI by strengthening digital competencies, promoting

ethical AI use, and preparing students and lecturers for a rapidly changing educational and employment landscape.

4. Development of the Tertiary Committee Position Paper

One of the Committee's most significant achievements during the reporting period was the development of a comprehensive Position Paper entitled *"Strengthening Jamaica's Tertiary Education Sector: Governance, Financing, Equity, Data Systems, and Programme & Labour Market Alignment."*

The position paper was developed through extensive consultation, environmental scanning, stakeholder engagement, and a review of the recommendations of the Patterson Report on the Reform of Education in Jamaica. It represents the collective voice of the Tertiary Committee and provides an evidence-based framework to guide advocacy on matters affecting Jamaica's higher education sector.

The document examines key issues relating to governance, sustainable financing, equitable access, higher education data systems, and the alignment of tertiary programmes with national workforce and labour market needs. It also presents strategic recommendations aimed at strengthening policy, enhancing institutional effectiveness, promoting innovation, and improving graduate outcomes.

The position paper serves as an important advocacy document for the Jamaica Teachers' Association and reflects the Committee's commitment to advancing a modern, equitable, sustainable, and globally competitive tertiary education sector that supports Jamaica's national development agenda.

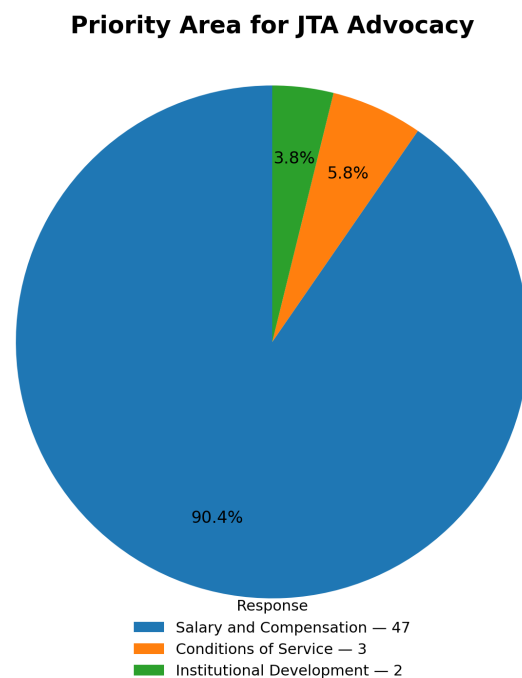
5. Sector Consultation Survey

As part of its evidence-informed approach to advocacy, the Committee designed and circulated a Google Forms survey to lecturers across the tertiary sector. The survey sought to identify the most pressing challenges confronting tertiary institutions and educators, including issues relating

to conditions of service, workload, funding, governance, staffing, research, student support, and institutional development.

The information collected provided valuable insight into sector-wide concerns and assisted the Committee in identifying priority areas for advocacy, policy development, and future engagement with stakeholders.

Collectively, these activities strengthened collaboration across the tertiary sector, enhanced communication between the Committee and its stakeholders, and provided a solid evidence base to inform recommendations for the continued advancement of tertiary education in Jamaica. The Pie Chart below outlines the responses from the survey.



Salary and Compensation: 47 (90.4%) | Conditions of Service: 3 (5.8%) | Institutional Development: 2 (3.8%)

CHALLENGES

The major challenges encountered include:

- Limited lecturer engagement due to institutional disruptions.
- Scheduling conflicts during the post-hurricane recovery period.
- Difficulty obtaining reliable data from affected colleges.
- Persistent misconceptions that JTA primarily serves pre-tertiary educators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Finalise and Enact the Higher Education Act

Recommend that the Government expedite the passage of the Higher Education Act to establish a modern legislative framework that clearly defines governance, quality assurance, accountability, institutional autonomy, and sustainable funding for Jamaica's higher education sector.

2. Develop a Comprehensive National Higher Education Policy

Advocate for the development and implementation of a national policy that aligns tertiary education with Jamaica's Vision 2030 goals, labour market demands, digital transformation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth.

3. Improve Conditions of Service for Tertiary Educators

Call for a comprehensive review of lecturers' remuneration and benefits, including:

- Competitive salary scales;
- Research and publication grants;
- Compensation for practicum supervision, curriculum development, and student assessment;
- Improved health insurance and retirement benefits;
- Opportunities for professional advancement.

4. Establish a National Research and Innovation Fund

Recommend the creation of a dedicated fund to support research, innovation, patents, community-based projects, and industry partnerships across all tertiary institutions, particularly in STEM, education, health sciences, agriculture, and climate resilience.

5. Increase Government Investment in Tertiary Education

Advocate for increased budgetary allocations to improve:

- Teaching and learning infrastructure;
- Digital technologies;
- Laboratories;
- Libraries;
- Student support services;
- Institutional resilience.

6. Strengthen Teacher Education and Practicum Partnerships

Recommend stronger collaboration among tertiary institutions, the Ministry of Education, the Jamaica Teaching Council, and schools by:

- Establishing national standards for practicum;
- Providing incentives for cooperating teachers;
- Expanding high-quality practicum sites;
- Strengthening mentorship programmes.

7. Expand Flexible Learning Opportunities

Encourage greater investment in:

- Online learning;
- Hybrid delivery;
- Micro-credentials;
- Stackable certificates;
- Lifelong learning programmes to increase access for working adults and underserved communities.

8. Promote Mental Health and Staff Well-being

Recommend that every tertiary institution establish comprehensive wellness programmes for both students and staff, including:

- Counselling services;
- Employee assistance programmes;
- Burnout prevention initiatives;
- Mental health awareness campaigns.

9. Strengthen University–Industry Partnerships

Encourage structured partnerships between tertiary institutions and the public and private sectors to:

- Increase internships;
- Expand work-integrated learning;
- Improve graduate employability;
- Facilitate research commercialisation;
- Support entrepreneurship and innovation.

10. Modernise Governance through Shared Leadership

Recommend governance reforms that strengthen institutional effectiveness by:

- Increasing academic staff representation in decision-making;
- Promoting transparency and accountability;
- Encouraging shared governance between administrators and faculty;
- Using evidence-based planning and performance evaluation.

Additional Strategic Recommendations the Tertiary Sector Could Also Consider:

- Introduce a national digital transformation strategy for higher education.
- Expand scholarships and financial assistance for postgraduate students.
- Develop a national framework for Artificial Intelligence in higher education.
- Strengthen quality assurance and accreditation systems.
- Improve support for students with disabilities through universal design for learning.
- Encourage regional and international research collaboration.
- Expand international student recruitment to generate additional revenue.

- Introduce succession planning and leadership development programmes for academic administrators.
- Increase funding for technical and vocational higher education programmes.
- Establish a national higher education data observatory to inform policy and planning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMMENDATIONS

A heartfelt appreciation is extended to Ms. Petal Thompson, our Regional Officer, for her professionalism, dedication, and unwavering support in servicing the Tertiary Committee. Her efficiency, attention to detail, and commitment have been instrumental to the effective functioning of the committee. We sincerely thank her for her invaluable contribution and outstanding service.

To President Elect Mrs. La Sonya Harrison, thank you for your encouragement, guidance, and consistent support of the committee's work.

I also wish to express sincere thanks to our President, Mr. Mark Malabver, for his visionary leadership and for the confidence he has placed in this committee. Thank you for championing the interests of educators across Jamaica and for recognising the vital role of the tertiary sector within the Jamaica Teachers' Association. Your support has allowed this committee to advance meaningful discussions and develop recommendations that we trust will strengthen our profession and our education system.

To the administrative staff of the Jamaica Teachers' Association, please accept our heartfelt appreciation for your professionalism, responsiveness, and behind-the-scenes efforts that have ensured the smooth operation of our meetings and activities. Your work often goes unseen, but it is essential to the success of the Association, and we thank you sincerely.

Finally, to every member of this committee, thank you for your dedication, thoughtful contributions, collegiality, and commitment throughout the year. The work we have accomplished is a testament to what can be achieved when experienced professionals come together with a shared purpose. It has been both an honour and a privilege to serve as your Chair.

CONCLUSION

The Tertiary Committee remains committed to strengthening tertiary engagement within the Association and advancing the national discourse on higher education reform. Despite significant challenges caused by natural disasters and structural sector issues, the team continues to demonstrate resilience, collaboration, and focus. The Committee has successfully advanced key deliverables, including stakeholder engagement activities, the national forum, and the completion of the draft position paper.

Prepared by: Dr. Maureen Mullings-Nelson
Chairman