

# REPORT

## FACULTY RESEARCH GRANT

### AN ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO NEWSPAPERS: NATIONAL ELECTIONS 2002

by

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#### **Description of grant-supported activity:**

I arrived in Trinidad on the afternoon of July 22, 2003, and began my research on July 23, 2003. I went to the National Library, to examine all the political advertisements that appeared in each of the three main Trinidad and Tobago newspapers, *Express*, *Guardian*, and *Newsday*, between August 28, 2002, the day that the Trinidad and Tobago parliament had been dissolved, and October 6, 2002, the day before the general elections.

Since there was no facility for photostating copies of the advertisements, I noted the dates of each advertisement, and went to the libraries of each newspaper to arrange to retrieve them. I had to go through the files of each newspaper, before I could get the newspapers to locate the advertisements. It was a very lengthy process, which was completed on August 11, 2002, the day before I returned to the U.S.

On my return to South Bend, I sorted out the advertisements according to the political party from which they originated. The two main parties were the People's National Movement, the incumbent government, and the United National Congress, the opposition party, and past government. I then read the content of each advertisement, approximately 500 in total. I categorized the advertisements, after reading literature about the main issues in the campaign – corruption in government was the most important, followed by the economy, national security, and crime.

I also examined the nature of the advertisements whether they were negative or attack advertisements or whether they were positive, referring to accomplishments of the past or present government, as well as national unity (despite party affiliations).

#### **Were you able to complete the project? Describe any difficulty you had.**

I have completed the project. The major difficulty was the amount of time expended in collecting, and categorizing the advertisements.

#### **Did or the project result in a specific product – a manuscript, composition, syllabus, etc. If so, please describe and indicate development**

I have done a manuscript, but I am still doing some major revisions. I am presently in consultation with one of my peers at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad, getting feedback about the paper. After these revisions, I expect the report to be completed by the end of November, 2003.

I have shared the manuscript with the Director of African New World Studies at Florida International University, and she has invited me to do a presentation in February 2004.