

## ECCB Helps Students Bridge Academics and Real World

Spending three months at the ECCB has given two university graduates the practical experience of linking economic theory to reality.

Shernel Thompson who recently completed a BSc Degree in Economics and Accounting and Kazon Simmons who is finalising his research for a Masters Degree in Financial and Business Economics, completed their internships at the Research Department of the ECCB on August 28. Both students read for their degrees at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus.

The internships, which were arranged by the Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre (CARTAC), afforded the students the opportunity of going on country missions in St Kitts, attending meetings with consultants from the IMF and CARTAC, writing policy briefs and research papers, and attending the Bank's seminar series sessions.

Shernel said he had other options but decided to take the internship at the ECCB because "I felt that the ECCB would give me the grounding that I needed to enter the economics background, coming from a monetary policy institute....I guess that having an internship at an institution such as this would place everything into context if you are not sure where you are going."

He was attached to the country economist for St Vincent and the Grenadines. He said his stint at the ECCB has helped him to bridge the gaps between university, the working world and practical economics. It has also helped to improve his writing skills, especially since he discovered that the ECCB sets very high standards. "It sets a bar for you to jump to," he said. "If you are looking to expand your horizon, I think this is the place you would want to come," he added.



*Shernel Thompson*



*Kazon Simmons*

Apart from the new knowledge, Shernel left the ECCB with fond memories. "The warmth of the staff at the Research Department stands out as number one. I enjoyed it thoroughly," he said smiling broadly.

Kazon said his experience at the ECCB was similarly rewarding. "It has been a learning experience," he said. "There were areas of theory where I had no practical knowledge of how they are applied. I saw the application through being at the Central Bank. I have learnt to be a bit more critical in my thinking and the need to be sensitive to issues at the national level," he added.

His short stint at the ECCB has also helped to broaden Kazon's perspective of the Bank. "I have a more rounded appreciation of the operation of the Central Bank and its purpose in the ECCU," he said.

Both students attended and made presentations at the ECCB seminar series. Shernel examined Agricultural Policy in St Vincent and the Grenadines: the Fisheries Sub-sector, while Kazon presented a paper on Public Debt Management in St Kitts and Nevis. According to Kazon, the seminar series gave him a better appreciation for the different perspectives of economics and how they link to programmes and policies that could be feasible for a country.

The ECCB internship

programme is open to students from the University of the West Indies to develop their skills in a dynamic work environment. The programme seeks to:

- provide opportunities for ECCB economists to exchange ideas with graduate students who would have been exposed to the more recent academic training in economics
- have basic research done in areas of interest to the Bank
- provide experience to the interns in a central bank environment
- strengthen research links with the UWI and other institutions.

**We give ourselves needless stress when we indulge in habitual procrastination.**

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