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Barbados Looking to Partner With NOAA for Student Internships

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BARBADOS — The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is exploring the possibility of working with the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training (METVT) to offer internships and real-world training to Barbadian students, the Barbados government has made known.

Minister Santia Bradshaw met with Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere Administration and Deputy NOAA Administrator, Rear Admiral (retired), Tim Gallaudet, recently at the ministry's headquarters, to see how the METVT and the NOAA could work together to benefit the education sector.

The assistant secretary is in Barbados to launch the NOAA ATOMIC (Atlantic Tradewind Oceanic-Atmosphere Mesoscale Interaction Campaign) Field Campaign. A NOAA ship is currently here to conduct field testing.

The campaign aims to improve scientific understanding of the interactions between clouds, the air and the ocean in the tropical North Atlantic east of Barbados, the government said.

While the ship is in Barbados, there will be tours of the vessel by students of secondary schools and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology (SJPI), who are pursuing drone studies.

Ms. Bradshaw disclosed that the Ministry introduced a drone program this year at the SJPI, and suggested that the institute could work with the NOAA to give students further exposure.

She said she believed exposing students to the use of drones in scientific research would help them to better understand what they learned in the classroom through real-world experience.

The minister added that most Barbadians associated drones with taking aerial photos or videos, but were not that familiar with their scientific uses.

Mr. Gallaudet said the ship conducted all types of scientific research using new sonar and drone technologies.

He explained that the NOAA ship used various drones – aerial, surface and underwater – to collect data. He also noted that sonar technologies were able to send back hi-definition images which looked like visual images.

“It is important for safety navigation ... for understating geological processes like the earthquake that hit Puerto Rico,” he said.

Ms. Bradshaw said she looked forward to further discussions with the NOAA to see how both entities could cooperate in the area of education.