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Women in Physics: A Caribbean Perspective

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This paper is concerned with aspects of post-secondary education of women in physics in the Caribbean, focusing more specifically on the main university campuses in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Barbados. Within this framework, there are three institutions of tertiary education that provide for undergraduate and post-graduate studies in physics. On average, the bachelor-level graduating class is roughly 40% female. A great majority of these students go on to seek master's degrees in engineering. Among those enrolled in graduate programs featuring research in astronomy, materials science, environmental physics, medical physics, and quantum physics, 58% are female. Significant numbers of women from the selected countries and from the Caribbean region are engaged in bachelor and doctoral programs in physics abroad, but no formal survey is available to provide the relevant quantitative information. However, an attempt will be made to quantify this component. Based in part on personal experience, a comparison will be made between domestic and foreign educational pathways, in terms of access to resources, level of research training, and occupational opportunities following graduation.