

Georgetown, Guyana

UG School of Medicine regains accreditation

The School of Medicine at The University of Guyana (UG) was recently “accorded Accreditation for four years from 2017-2021 by the Caribbean Authority for Education in Medicine and other Health Professions (CAAM-HP). The decision to grant re-accreditation with a few conditions to the UG School of Medicine was made at the July 2017 meeting of CAAM-HP. The School first gained accreditation in 2008 and functioned as a professionally accredited institution up to 2015.

The re-accreditation of the School, located in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Turkeyen campus, follows a site visit to UG in November of 2016 by a team of evaluators from CAAM-HP, to conduct a comprehensive re-evaluation of the teaching/learning facilities available at the School and meet with the various administrative sections of the University and medical students. The team comprised Team Chair, Professor Christopher Stephens, Emeritus Professor of Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine, University of Southampton, UK; Team Secretary, Professor Jonas Innies Addae, former Head of Preclinical Sciences Dept. and former Deputy Dean, Faculty of Medical Sciences, The University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus, Trinidad & Tobago; and Professor Trevor McCartney, Professor of Surgery and Deputy Dean, Faculty of Medical Sciences, The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica and former Medical Chief of Staff, University Hospital of the West Indies, Jamaica. The team was accompanied by Ms Lorna Parkins, Executive Director of CAAM-HP and Professor Emerita Marlene Hamilton, Chair of the CAAM-HP Council.

In commenting on this long awaited announcement Vice-Chancellor Professor Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith congratulated the faculty, students and staff of the School of Medicine “on this signally important decision” and expressed appreciation to personnel and students of the School, the University Library, Registry, Estate Management, Information Technology, Personnel Division and other units, His Excellency President David Granger, the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education, PAHO/WHO, and the Georgetown Public Hospital, for their contributions to this successful outcome. He stated that "This investment of time and resources by the university in the re-accreditation of the School of Medicine is a tribute to the entire university and it strengthens our brand overall as we pursue Project Renaissance." He further said, “however, substantial amounts of time and money will be required to complete the needed enhancements of one of our flagship programmes." This sentiment was echoed by the Director of the School Dr Ronald Aaron who emphasised that the accreditation was due to "community effort, now the real work begins".

Shafali Milton, President of the University of Guyana Medical Students’ Association, expressed pride in the role played by the students in the eventual outcome. She said, “The road to regain our status as a regionally accredited medical school was filled with countless challenges, however, we, the student body were undaunted and did everything in our power to assist. We are elated at the result of hard work from both the administration and the student body and on this note; we would like to thank everyone who contributed in the process. The UGSM has regained its position as a prestigious institution in the Caribbean, one which the current students as well as its alumni can be proud to be associated with. We look forward to new endeavors as the journey continues".

Dean of The Faculty of Health Sciences, Dr Emanuel Cummings, noted in his brief history of the School that it was established in 1985 in the Faculty of Health Sciences as a Medical Practitioners programme which included four years of medical training and two years of internship. This was upgraded in 1990 to a five-year programme followed by a one-year internship. To date, the School has graduated more than 500 doctors who are working in Europe, North America, Asia, Africa, Australia, the CARICOM Region and locally in leading positions in the Health Care Sector. Notable graduates include the current Junior Minister of Public Health, The Chief Medical Officer, Heads of Paediatrics, General Surgery, Orthopaedics, Cardiology, Emergency Medicine and Internal Medicine at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC).

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UG IN BRIEF

With a current enrollment of some 8,000 students, The University of Guyana (UG) has graduated more than 20,000 students who have gone on to successful careers locally, regionally and internationally. The University is also a major contributor to the national economy and to business and industry. Established in 1963 on a part-time basis with shared space at Queens College, UG moved to its own campus at Turkeyen in 1970 and expanded in 2000 with the addition of the Tain Campus. It now offers more than 60 Under-graduate and Post-graduate Programmes including Engineering, Environmental Studies, Forestry, Urban Planning and Management, Tourism Studies, Education, Creative Arts, Economics, Law, Medicine, Optometry and Nursing. Several online programmes are available and The UG also offers extra-mural classes at four locations through its Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE). The UG also offers the opportunity for student engagement in debating, sports, and cultural, religious and professional activities.

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