



**UNIVERSITY of GUYANA**

Turkeyen, P.O. Box 101110, Georgetown, Guyana, South America  
Website: [uog.edu.gy](http://uog.edu.gy)

**OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**

**Ivelaw L. Griffith, PhD, MPhil, MA, BSocSc**

**Principal and Vice-Chancellor**

Tel: +(592) 222 3583 Fax: +(592) 222 8063 E-mail: [vicechancellor@uog.edu.gy](mailto:vicechancellor@uog.edu.gy)

---

**TO: Academic Community**

**FROM: Principal and Vice-Chancellor**

**DATE: August 24, 2018**

**SUBJECT: Welcome to 2018/2019 Academic Year**

---

As we embark upon the new Academic Year, permit me to extend a warm welcome to all students and staff who are joining us for the first time, and a welcome back to those of you who are returning to study or teach and conduct research and service.

A new Academic Year is an opportune time to reflect on the past year's journey. In doing this reflection, I wish to express my deep appreciation to all colleagues for your hard work, which resulted in many notable gains, some of which are recalled below; we:

1. Completed the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry expansion, which provides for student recreational space, new offices, a fire escape and sanitary block, which cost \$26.2 Million; commenced construction of a Student Social Complex, the initial cost of which is \$30.3 Million; held the ribbon cutting for the Tain library extension, which cost \$18.5 Million; and held the ground breaking ceremony for the new Math and Science Building at Turkeyen, which will cost \$66 Million.
2. Signed multiple agreements for technical and financial support for oil and gas, agriculture and forestry, foreign languages and the construction of a new library, as part of strengthening our international partnerships. The partners include: UWI, University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), Anton De Kom University of Suriname, the University of French Guiana, Amapa University of Brazil, GT&T,

the Embassy of China, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Caribbean Development Bank.

3. Conducted a university-wide IT Audit; procured laptops and projectors for Berbice Campus (\$2 Million); and engaged contractors for:
  - J21 Rehabilitation in the Faculty of Education & Humanities (\$1.8 Million) and of three shade houses for Agriculture and Forestry (\$ 4.1 Million).
  - Rehabilitation of the Centre for the Study of Biological Biodiversity building (\$1.4 Million).
  - Roof and other rehabilitation and bat treatment for the Library at Turkeyen, which is still ongoing (\$10 Million plus).
4. Appointed the first set of Academic Advisors to enhance student success; improved the timeliness of grade submission; celebrated the successful completion of the first year of operation of the School of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation (SEBI); commissioned the solar panels on the Faculty of Natural Sciences thus reducing the energy bill; and completed an assessment of the Turkeyen sewerage system.
5. Established the Conversation on Law and Society Series to examine issues of great importance and currency to the Guyanese public, with the President of the Caribbean Court of Justice and the President of the University of Trinidad and Tobago being among the notable speakers; held a Consultation on World Languages and began revision of the Spanish, Portuguese and French Programmes; and hosted a Consultation on Writing.

Thanks to the hard work of persons on and off campus, we also:

6. Secured or started negotiations for, among other things: US\$40,000 to rebuild burnt out Natural Sciences area; US\$500,000 from the Ministry of Natural Resources to support the Faculty of Engineering and Technology (FET) and other Faculties; \$10 million in refrigeration equipment for FET; US\$400,000 for the Jay and Sylvia Sobhraj Centre for Behavioural Science and Research; U\$250,000 for the Nand Persaud Soil Testing Laboratory at Tain; US\$25,000 grant from Exxon towards the enhancement of the Faculty of Agriculture; US\$500,000 worth of items including video equipment from Huawei; US\$10,000 from Scotia Bank towards a smart Classroom for the Faculty of Natural Sciences.
7. Held an Oil and Gas Consultation; renamed the Faculty of Technology as the Faculty of Engineering and Technology; hosted a Consultation on Food and Nutrition Security and established a Feasibility Study Team on the matter; and launched new diplomas in Psychology and Land Management Administration, in conjunction with UNICEF and the Commission on Lands and Surveys.

8. Hosted Professorial Lectures at the Turkeyen and Tain campuses; held the successful Inaugural Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation; hosted a rewarding Local Content Forum; launched Alumni Associations in Georgetown, Berbice, Toronto, and London; and awarded the first Renaissance Scholarships to two Indigenous students from the Bina Hill Institute in the North Rupununi.
9. Applauded Dr. Dawn Fox from Natural Science on her receipt of the OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Award for Early-Career Women Scientists in the Developing World; hosted the inaugural meeting of the Editorial Board of the University of Guyana Press and successful Second Annual Undergraduate Research Conferences at Turkeyen and Tain; and sent several student delegations abroad, including to Oklahoma, Georgia, and Massachusetts, USA, and to Trinidad.
10. Witnessed improved Internet services across the university, including in the Registry, PACE, Personnel, Institute for Gender Studies, Senior Common Room and NBS Dorms. Work is almost complete on rewiring the entire Tain campus for computer services that include Voice over IP (VoIP). The new "UG Turkeyen WiFi" combined with the "Government Free WiFi" wireless networks now ensure that students and staff have access to free WiFi almost throughout Turkeyen. Plus, the Tain campus now is completely covered by the free "UGBC WiFi" network.

Of importance, too, the Governance Reform Committee, which was led by Professor Lawrence Carrington, a former Vice Chancellor, concluded its 16 months of work, which led to consideration and approval of the proposed new University of Guyana Act by the University Council. Changes include reducing the size of the University Council from 26 to 17 and removing the provisions for political and other special interests and for international representation from Britain, Canada, the USA and UWI. As regards the Statutes, the Council approved several revisions, relating, among other things, to the Officers of the University, committees of the Council, the powers of the various committees, the Alumni Association, and discipline of students and staff. The revisions that were not settled have been referred to a Council sub-committee, with a view to the final adoption of the entire document at November's Annual Business Meeting.

This new Academic Year holds considerable promise of rewarding engagements as we continue the journey along Renaissance Road. Plans are underway to further improve Internet bandwidth and availability, and to extend VoIP, which was initially installed only in the new Registry building, to all campuses, and to have the campuses linked to form a UG Wide Area Network that will allow seamless communications. Also, I am pleased to inform you that the sum of G\$17 million has been donated to refurbish the Cheddi B. Jagan Lecture Theatre. The renovations, which have begun, will facilitate a more conducive and comfortable teaching and learning environment for our students and the many lecturers who teach there.

We also are working on some other exciting initiatives, including:

- A new Department of Petroleum and Geological Engineering in the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, which will offer the Master of Science in Petroleum Engineering in conjunction with the University of the West Indies, and the Associate of Science in Petroleum Engineering in conjunction with the University of Trinidad and Tobago.
- An Institute of Food and Nutrition Security, with the main UG players being the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry and the Faculty of Natural Sciences. As part of the Institute's pursuits, we will offer the Bachelor of Science in Food Science through the Faculty of Natural Sciences from January 2019. Plans also are underway to offer the Bachelor of Arts in Youth Development through the Faculty of Education and Humanities from that time.
- A Consortium of Post-Secondary Institutions, to be called the Higher Education Consortium on Engineering and Mining (HECEM), which will include all the Technical and Vocational Institutes across the country, along with the Council on Technical and Vocational Education. HECEM is intended to streamline and strengthen education delivery in relation to energy and mining.
- A new degree in Nursing at Tain; the conferral of our first Honorary Doctorates; leadership reflections on Presidents Forbes Burnham and Arthur Chung; the launch of the first publications of The University of Guyana Press; and the start of planning for the combined Second Diaspora Engagement Conference and the Second Entrepreneurship and Innovation Conference next July.

As well, our Education Resource Ambassadors in the Diaspora continue lend their time, talent, and treasure to our Renaissance Pursuits. For example, Ambassadors in New York and New Jersey, who have established the Alumni and Friends of the University of Guyana (AFOUG), are in the final stages of planning for their Second Annual Fund-Raising Gala, to be held in New York on September 8. Not to be outdone, Ambassadors in the Washington, DC, Virginia, and Maryland areas are planning their Renaissance Gala for October 26 at the University of the District of Columbia.

Further, as I have announced elsewhere, I will be launching a **Campaign on Values**, to strengthen our precepts and practices related to Respect, Integrity, and Excellence. Thus, overall, I am excited about the wonderful opportunities—despite the many challenges—to make a difference within the University and in the Nation as we continue our journey along Renaissance Road.

I thank you for your continued dedication, and I look forward to our continued pursuit of Excellence in all aspects of our educational and economic enterprise.

Let us keep on keeping on!