

# RENAISSANCE

Office of the Vice-Chancellor Vol. 3 No. 4, October - December, 2018

## UG MAKES HISTORY

On November 10, 2018, history was created when the University of Guyana held three graduation ceremonies on the same day for the first time. A batch of 1,730 students graduated from the Faculties of Agriculture and Forestry, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Education and Humanities, Engineering and Technology, Health Sciences, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, the School of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation, and the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education.

*continues on pg 15*



### Recognising a Guyanese Icon

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UNIVERSITY of GUYANA

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# The VC Speaks

## HORIZONS AND STEPS OF CHANGE

***“The horizon leans forward offering you space to place new steps of change.”***  
***-- Maya Angelou***

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This edition of the Renaissance Newsletter clearly shows that Renaissance Dreaming and Doing continue powerfully with various initiatives and achievements, ranging from the Conversation on Law and Society, the new maintenance building, the Masters in Social Work research presentations, the Turkeyen and Tain Talks, the sports excellence event, the Renaissance Lecture/Panel Discussion, the Christmas Cheer offered to children of Sophia, and the celebration of the life and legacy of business icon Dr Yesu Persaud, among other things.

But, perhaps of all the wonderful features captured in this edition, there are two that best resonate with and reflect the prescience of Maya Angelou captured above, in offering spaces to place new steps of change. One was the November Convocation ceremonies, and another was the launch of the first publication of The University of Guyana Press that occurred in December.

The 52nd Convocation at Turkeyen witnessed several firsts: three ceremonies—and in one day; the first time we maintained a convocation website; the largest ever graduating class (1,739 graduands); the first time we graduated students with the Diploma in General Psychology, Master of Medicine in Emergency Medicine and in Family Medicine, Master in Social Work, Bachelor of Science in Environment Health, Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and Information Systems, and Bachelor of Social Sciences in Business Economics.

We also created history at that Convocation in conferring our first honorary doctorates to four inspirational Guyanese: Dr Edmund Grant for Excellence in Music and Civic Engagement; Dr Yesu Persaud for Iconic Leadership in Business and Banking; Dr Jairaj Sobhraj for Excellence in Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy; and Dr Laura George for Outstanding Community Development and Advocacy. All the candidates delivered powerful messages.

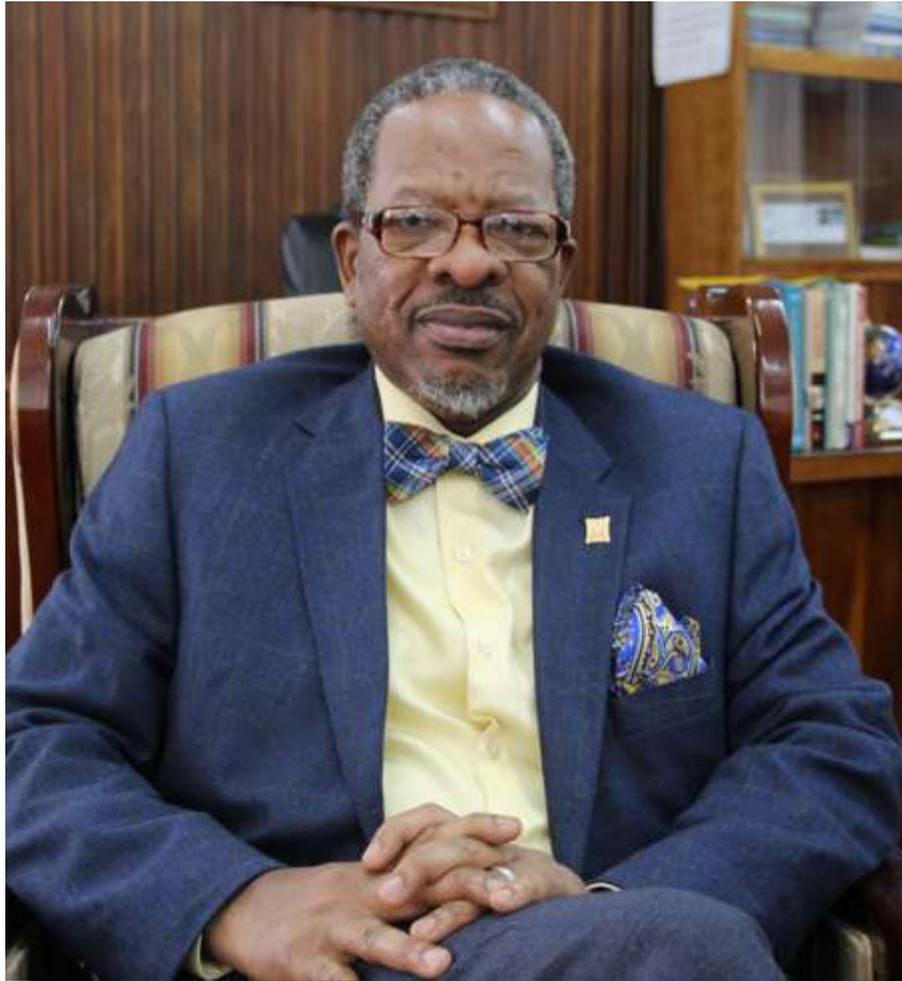
The Convocation at the Berbice Campus was their 17th which also had some notable highlights. Among the 200 students who graduated were twins Ruth Grace Rambharak and Rachel Grace Rambharak, both of whom completed the Diploma in Accountancy. Convocation Day also was an extra special day for Marvin Mahendra Dindyal who graduated with the Bachelor of Social Science, Public Management. He celebrated his 39th birthday that day.

The launch on December 13, 2018 of the first publication of The University of Guyana Press also highlights Maya Angelou’s words of wisdom. The book, “Dynamics of Caribbean Diaspora Engagement: People, Policy, Practice,” offers new steps of change for both the contributors to the book and the Renaissance Journey endeavours to enhance research and scholarships.

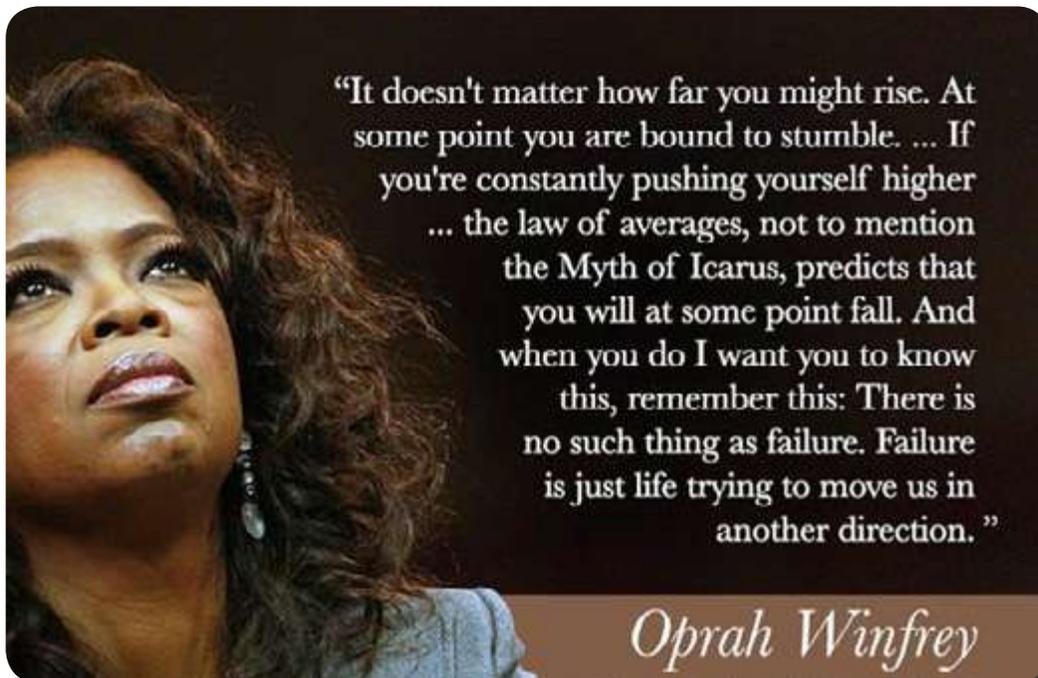
Keep on keeping on!



Professor Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith, PhD, C.C.H.  
 Tenth Vice-Chancellor



*THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OCTOBER - DECEMBER QUOTE*



# Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

The University of Guyana welcomes you to Vol. 3, No.4 of the Renaissance Newsletter from the Office of the Vice-Chancellor. The Renaissance is a medium in which we share all the latest activities and events, as well as developments taking place at The University of Guyana.

The University of Guyana celebrated its 55th anniversary in October 2018. Congratulations are extended to the management and staff on this milestone and continued success on their Renaissance journey. In honour of this milestone this edition will commence with a pictorial display of the genesis of the institution.

Among the many noteworthy events during the period covered by this edition was the hosting of three graduation ceremonies for the first time in the history of The University of Guyana, the conferral of honorary doctorates on four worthy Guyanese and the launch of the first book through The University of Guyana Press.

Other notable mentions are the long-service award ceremony for staff, the launch of the Food and Nutrition Security Institute, and construction of a new maintenance building. In addition, the Faculty of Health Sciences hosted mental health fair and Computer Science Lecturers collaborated with Ministry of Public Telecommunications to host Information Communication Technology workshops around Guyana.

This edition will also show some of the university's holiday festivities, including the Public Relations Division Christmas cheer outreach to children of the community. You can read about these and more much.

On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and staff of The University of Guyana, we invite you to follow the progress and achievements of the University through future editions of Renaissance, and to spread the word about these exciting developments.



Leisa Somrah

Editor



Editor

**UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA**  
**Vice-Chancellor's Fund for Strategic Initiatives**  
*Giving to UG*

**WIRE TRANSFER INFORMATION**

To make transfers directly to The University of Guyana, you will need the following information:

**Beneficiary name and address:** University of Guyana, Turkeyen Campus,  
East Coast Demerara

**Beneficiary account number:** University of Guyana Foreign Exchange  
Account 001-124-7

**Bank name and address:** Republic Bank (Guyana) Limited,  
38 Water Street, Robbstown, Georgetown  
GUYANA

**SWIFT/ABA/Routing number:** RBGLGYGG

***IF INTERMEDIARY BANK IS REQUESTED***

**Corresponding bank:** USA

**Bank name and address:** Bank of America, 100 West 33rd Street,  
N.Y. 10001

**ABA code:** 026009593  
**SWIFT code:** BOFAUS3N  
**Account number:** 6550325990

Also, Cheques can be made payable to The University of Guyana and sent to the attention of Chief of Staff, Office of the Vice-Chancellor, The University of Guyana, Turkeyen Campus, Greater Georgetown, Guyana.



## Renaissance Scorecard II

June 2017- July 2018

This Scorecard highlights some of the pursuits and gains of Project *Renaissance* during Year II. Some are small, others large, some are tangible while others are process and stage-setting as we journey along *Renaissance* Road. Yet, all are significant, in that they complement and reinforce earlier and other efforts to rebuild and rebrand the University. They re-reflect the hard and dedicated work by academic and administrative staff, students, government officials, the University's Education Resource Ambassadors at home and abroad, business and civic supporters, and others.

“My vision is to make UG into a dynamic, nationally relevant, world class University and to do it as quickly as possible. This requires a *Renaissance*.” - Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith

- Successfully nominated Scientist Dr Dawn Fox for the OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Award for Early-Career Women Scientists in the Developing World; hosted the milestone 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 Trinidad, and Oklahoma, Georgia, and Massachusetts.
- Improved Internet services across the University, including in the Registry, PACE, Personnel, Institute for Gender Studies, Senior Common Room and NBS Dorms. The new "UG Turkeyen WiFi" and the "Government Free WiFi" wireless networks now provide Turkeyen with free WiFi almost throughout campus, and Tain is fully covered by the free "UGBC WiFi" network.
- Increased 2017/2018 enrollment over 2016/2017 by 3.16 percent; awarded the first Renaissance Scholarships to two Indigenous students from the Bina Hill Institute in the North Rupununi; and launched new diplomas in Psychology and Land Management Administration, with the support of UNICEF and the Commission on Lands and Surveys.
- Paid 2017 salary increases of 6 percent to UA staff and 8 percent to UB staff, an average of 4.5 percent for merit, and allowances for traveling, entertainment, academic materials, study leave (salary and housing for three months), sabbatical leave (salary and housing for 12 months), leave passage, and responsibility allowances for Coordinators, Heads, and Deans.
- Hired a Business Development Manager to boost the entrepreneurial pursuits of the University and create and strengthen corporate partnerships, and a Supply and Logistics Officer to improve and streamline the University's procurement system.
- Negotiated/signed Academic Collaboration Agreements focused on research, academic programs and overall academic enhancement with external stakeholders, including Guyana Defence Force, Power Producers & Distributors Inc., Guyana School of Agriculture, Guyana Police Force, Guyana Lands and Survey Commission, Macorp, and Citizens Security Project.
- Created the UG Guyana Broadcast Trust to manage the University's Broadcast Licenses in support of teaching Broadcast Journalism; created a database of 20,000 potential partners; created and implemented an 'I love UG' Alumni campaign; and launched the University of Guyana Alumni Association, with Chapters in Berbice and Toronto (and London).
- Completed the Agriculture and Forestry expansion, which provides for student recreational space, new offices, a fire escape and sanitary block (\$26.2 Million); began work on a Student Social Complex (initial cost, \$30.3 Million); opened Tain library extension (\$18.5 Million); and broke ground for the new Math and Science Building at Turkeyen, to cost \$66 Million.

*June 2017—July 2018*

- 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 FAO, and the CDB.
- Provided laptops and projectors for Berbice Campus (\$2 Million); and engaged contractors for: rehabilitation in Education & Humanities (\$1.8 Million) and construction of three shade houses for Agriculture and Forestry (\$ 4.1 Million); rehabilitation of the Biodiversity Centre (\$1.4 Million); and for the Library at Turkeyen, which is still ongoing (\$10 Million plus).
- Appointed the first set of Academic Advisors to enhance student success; improved the timeliness of grade sub-mission; celebrated the successful completion of the first year of operation of the School of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation (SEBI); and hosted a Consultation on Writing to begin efforts to improve the writing proficiency of students.
- Created the Conversation on Law and Society Series to examine issues of great importance to the society. Justice Courtney Abel of Belize, Justice Adrian Saunders, President of the Caribbean Court of Justice, Jurist-in-Residence Carl Singh, and Professor Karim Al Zubaidy, President of the University of Trinidad and Tobago, were among the notable speakers.
- Appointed Keith Waithe and Dave Martins as Artists-in-Residence, with events held in different parts of the country; named retired Chancellor of the Guyana Judiciary Carl Singh as the inaugural Jurist-in-Residence (and later as Head of the Department of Law); and appointed Dr. Vincent Adams as inaugural Distinguished Visiting Engineer-in-Residence.
- Secured, among other things: US\$500,000 from the Ministry of Natural Resources to support Engineering and Technology and other units; US\$400,000 for Jay and Sylvia Sobhraj Centre for Behavioural Science and Research; US\$250,000 for Nand Persaud Soil Testing Laboratory at Tain; US\$25,000 grant from Exxon towards the enhancement of Agriculture and Forestry.
- US\$500,000 worth of items including video equipment from Huawei; and US\$10,000 from Scotia Bank towards a smart Classroom for Natural Sciences.
- Held an Oil and Gas Consultation; renamed the Faculty of Technology the Faculty of Engineering and Technology; hosted a Consultation on Food and Nutrition Security and established a Feasibility Study Team to establish an Institute on Food and Nutrition Security, supported by a US\$50,000 grant from the FAO.
- Hosted Professorial Lectures at Turkeyen and Tain (first time), delivered by Professors Michael Scott, Paloma Mohamed and Gomathinayagam Subramaniam; held the successful Inaugural Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation; and hosted a rewarding Oil and Gas Local Content Forum.

**ABOUT Project Renaissance**

Project *Renaissance* aims to rebuild UG's educational and economic enterprise and enable it to become a consequential national and international educational stakeholder. It is both a Dreaming project and a Doing project, with four main pillars or Imperatives, which are:

- *Capital Investment*, which involves human, finance, physical and brand capital;
- *Academic Enhancement*, which entails improving instructional needs and credentials, curricula, teaching and learning, and introducing new educational programmes;
- *Economic Viability*, which requires fortifying the major existing revenue streams (government subventions and tuition fees) and expanding the revenue base through alumni and corporate giving, grants, and merchandising; and
- *Alumni and Civic Engagement*, which entails embracing alumni and business and civic partners within and beyond Guyana, celebrating their achievements, and inviting them to invest in the University and the society's human capital development, as well as rebranding.

# THE GENESIS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA







UNIVERSITY of GUYANA

THE UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA

# 2019 NEW PROGRAMMES

APPLICATIONS OPEN SOON

## TURKEYEN CAMPUS

January

**Associate of Science (Petroleum Engineering)**

**Bachelor of Arts (Youth Works)**

**Bachelor of Science (Food Science)**

**Master of Science (Petroleum Engineering)**

August

**Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)**

**Master of Science (Psychology)**

**Master of Social Sciences (Communications)**

## BERBICE CAMPUS

January

**Bachelor of Science (Nursing)**

September

**Bachelor of Science (Civil Engineering)**

**For more information contact**

The University of Guyana  
Registry (Admissions), Turkeyen Campus  
Email: [admissions@uog.edu.gy](mailto:admissions@uog.edu.gy)  
Phone: (592) 227-2740 / 623-8325

*Designed by:*  
Office of Strategic Initiatives, Vice Chancellery  
(592) 222-8063 | (592) 222-4932 | (592) 623-0926

# YOUTH AT RISK OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES



Mental health is not just a concern for the Ministry of Social Protection, Public Health or Education – it is a societal concern, and statistics show that youths are deemed the most at-risk group for mental illness. This issue was the focus of the World Mental Health Day observances held on October 10, 2018, at The University of Guyana (UG).

The opening ceremony was followed by a mental health fair, held on the tarmac of the university campus. It was organised by the Faculty of Health Sciences and Department of Public Health, in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization and Ministry of Public Health. Under the theme ‘Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World’, the event sought to raise awareness and understanding of mental health issues and concerns in Guyana.



*Honourable Minister of Public Health Volda Lawrence and Dr Ronald Aaron, Medical Director and Lecturer, Faculty of Health Sciences, UG*

At the opening ceremony, Professor Paloma Mohamed, behavioural scientist and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Philanthropy, Alumni and Civic Engagement,

noted that the vast majority of the Guyanese population is below the age of 35. As youths have not developed the mental capacity to manage issues effectively, they should not be denied quality mental health care.

She proposed a few suggestions to improve mental health: 1) promote bonding among children, which is important for mental health; 2) foster resiliency and the capability to adapt; and 3) encourage self-efficiency. To help adopt a developmental orientation to mental health in Guyana, UG has begun construction of the Jay and Sylvia Sobhraj Centre for Behavioral Sciences and Research, which will offer psychology programmes in collaboration with courses from the Faculties of Social Sciences and Health Sciences.

**“If we change our attitude to mental health, we change the world” - UN Secretary-General António Guterres**

A World Health Organization (WHO) study shows that a number of mental health issues begin during childhood, shared Dr Emanuel Cummings, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. He noted that some mental health issues are stimulated by a number of factors, such as school activities, early independence and starting a new job. In response, The University of Guyana is collaborating with the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation to establish a resident programme in psychology.

According to the WHO, half of all

mental illnesses begin by the age of 14: “Depression is one of the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents and suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 29 years old.” It also notes that one in five adolescents experience mental health challenges, yet most remain under-diagnosed and undertreated.

The consequences of this are serious, as United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres has previously noted: “Poor mental health during adolescence



*Professor Paloma Mohamed, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Philanthropy, Alumni and Civic Engagement.*

has an impact on educational achievement and increases the risk of alcohol and substance use and violent behaviour.” The United Nations has therefore set an aim that by 2030, everyone everywhere has someone to turn to in support of their mental health – in a world free of stigma and discrimination.

Other speakers at the UG event included UN Resident Representative to Guyana, Ms Mikiko Tanaka; Dr William



*Ministry of Public Health booth*

Adu-Krow, WHO and Pan American Health Organization Representative; Ms Gillian Vyhius, Chief Schools' Welfare Officer; and Honourable Minister of Public Health Volda Lawrence. Minister Lawrence said: we are losing a human resource, our youth, and this impacts the social fabric of our community. Therefore the ministry is consolidating its efforts for the treatment of mental health issues by devising strategies and support programmes to address mental health in Guyana.

These strategies including the training of 35 health personnel by The University



Front row from left: Ms Gillian Vyhius, Chief Schools' Welfare Officer; Dr William Adu-Krow, WHO and Pan American Health Organization Representative; UN Resident Representative to Guyana, Ms Mikiko Tanaka

of the West Indies on mental-health drug treatment plans, in collaboration with the Organization of American States. Teachers will also be trained in the first quarter of 2019 to identify students with mental health issues, and students will be educated on the warning signs.

## On a path of continuous development

The University of Guyana is on a quest for development – not only academic but structural and infrastructural too. In this quest, a new maintenance



Dr Nigel Gravesande, Registrar, University of Guyana

building was erected and a ribbon-cutting ceremony held to mark its opening on September 28, 2018 at the new facility. For four decades the maintenance division was part of the bursary, but over the years it has grown to meet the needs of the university. Quoting Winston Churchill, Registrar Dr Nigel Gravesande noted: "We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us."



Mr Javid Samad, Engineer, Maintenance Division, University of Guyana

Mr Javid Samad, the engineer in charge of the project, expressed thanks to the Ministry of Education for its sup-

port in seeing the project to completion. He explained that the building is approximately 2,700 square feet and has had an investment of \$26million. The building is air conditioned, has adequate sanitary facilities, a kitchenette and other furnishings to make it fully equipped to serve the University of Guyana's maintenance needs.



Mr Bjorn Williams, Director, Maintenance Division, University of Guyana

Head of the Maintenance Facilities Division Mr Bjorn Williams noted that the completion of the two-year project marks a new beginning for the maintenance division and renewed its mission to serve and improve the university's maintenance.

The University of Guyana is not only an educational enterprise, it's also an economic enterprise, said Vice-Chancellor Professor Ivelaw Griffith. Sometimes we take for granted those things behind the scenes. However we have to invest in all aspects of the university, of which the maintenance division plays an important role. He noted the previous maintenance environment was unhealthy, saying we appreciate and value our staff therefore we had to make the environment condu-

cive to functioning effectively. In addition to the construction of the building, 48 staff have also been moved from a monthly to a yearly contract.



Honourable Minister of Education, Nicollette Henry

Honourable Minister of Education Nicollette Henry noted that maintenance is a sore point in our country's development, and congratulated the university on its continued effort to upgrade, saying: "Building Guyana's educational system is a priority for the Government of Guyana." Such progress will help to improve campus operations and the quality of service offered by the university. But, she added, there is more to be done to ensure quality education for all: Guyana should have some of the best, state-of-the-art facilities in the Caribbean, however we are building our dreams brick by brick. She envisages that with continuous development UG will excel in the service it provides to the nation.



A section of the audience

## *Supporting Breast Cancer Awareness Month*

The University of Guyana Berbice Campus Library held a Breast Cancer Awareness presentation on October 24, 2018 in the foyer of the library. This activity formed part of the observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, by engaging students and staff of The University of Guyana to think pink.

A team led by Dr Devendra Radhay, General Medical Officer of the New Amsterdam Public Hospital contributed to the activity. The other two members of the team, medical interns of Texila American University, supervised by the team leader, also presented. This activity was hosted with the intent to raise awareness of breast cancer among the staff of UGBC. The importance of breast cancer awareness, recognising the stages and symptoms of Breast Cancer, conducting self-examinations were among the highlights. At the end of the power point section UG students and educators engaged the medical team in further discussion on the critical issues discussed.

At the beginning of the activity the organisers pinned a pink ribbon on each member of the audience as a token of commitment to think pink. In order to deepen the commitment the audience members voluntarily appended their signatures on a display board emblazoned with the term, I PLEDGE TO THINK PINK



# UG MAKES HISTORY

The 52nd Convocation of The University of Guyana was held at the National Cultural Centre. Another first was made with the conferral of honorary doctorates on four distinguished Guyanese: Dr Yesu Persaud for Iconic Leadership in Business and Banking; Dr Edmond Grant for Excellence in Music and Civic Engagement; Dr Jairaj Sobhraj for Excellence in Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy; and Dr Laura George for Outstanding Community Development and Advocacy.



*Dr Jairaj Sobhraj conferred with honorary doctorate for Excellence in Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy, with Chancellor, Nigel E Harris and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ivelaw Griffith*

Students were also awarded medals for excellence in academic performance: the President's Medal for Best Graduating Bachelor's Degree Student was awarded to Shakti Persaud from the School of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation; the Chancellor's Medal for the Second Best Graduating Bachelor's Degree Student was awarded to Benita Davis from the Faculty of Earth and Environmental Sciences; the Prime Minister's Award for Best Graduating Student in the School of Medicine was awarded to Mohamed Safraz Nawaz Baksh; the Prime Minister's Medal for the Best Graduating Student with a Degree in Public Management was awarded to Kester Edwards; and the Pro-Chancellor's Medal for Best Graduating Law Student of The University of Guyana was awarded to Textine Wonda Daw.

The inaugural Francille Griffith Award for Excellence in Nursing was given to two students: a graduate, Marguerite Audrey Hoyte, from the Faculty of Health Sciences, and a third year student. The first batch of students also graduated with Masters in Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine and Business Economics.



*Dr Yesu Persaud conferred with honorary doctorate for Iconic Leadership in Business and Banking, with Chancellor, Nigel E Harris and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ivelaw Griffith*



*Textine Wonda Daw receives the Pro-Chancellor's Medal, Best Graduating Law Student, University of Guyana, from Pro-Chancellor, Major General Re'd Joe Singh*



*Ms Diana Gobin, Assistant Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences receives the Prime Minister's Medal on behalf of Kester Edward, Best Graduating Student, Degree in Public Management, from the honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carl Greenidge*



*Benita Davis from the Faculty of Earth and Environmental Sciences receives the Chancellor's Medal for the Second Best Graduating Bachelor's Degree Student from Chancellor Nigel E Harris*



*Mohamed Safraz Nawaz Baksh receives the Prime Minister's Award, Best Graduating Student in the School of Medicine, from the honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carl Greenidge*



*Recipient of the President's Medal for Best Graduating Bachelor's Degree Student, Shakti Persaud, School of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation, with honourable Minister of Education, Nicollette Henry*



*Dr Laura George conferred with honorary doctorate for Outstanding Community Development and Advocacy, with Chancellor, Nigel E Harris and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ivelaw Griffith*



*The Francille Griffith Award for Excellence in Nursing was presented to Marguerite Audrey Hoyte, Faculty of Health Sciences by Ms Francille Griffith*



*Dr Edmond Grant being conferred with honorary doctorate for Excellence in Music and Civic Engagement, with Chancellor, Nigel E Harris and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ivelaw Griffith*

## Professor David Phoenix OBE, Vice-Chancellor of London South Bank University, presents the Feature Address at The University of Guyana's Turkeyen Campus 52nd Graduation Ceremony held at the National Cultural Centre on November 10, 2018

*Warmest congratulations on your graduation.*

I first started to work with The University of Guyana nearly 20 years ago when my friend Professor Singh first introduced me to the university and its good work. He is a proud Guyanese and a proud alumni of this university.

Like me, he has experienced the transformational power of education, and as a university teacher and leader he has seen the way it can transform the lives of others.

The University of Guyana was created in 1963 to provide the Guyanese people with access to university education in their own country – without the need to travel. Those first students did not have access to new buildings or expansive facilities but they were drawn together by their desire to learn; studying part time, often in the evenings and at weekends, because they recognised the opportunity that education provided.

Whether you are going onto further study or entering the world of work, I have no doubt the hard work you have put in, and the support and guidance you have received from the University of Guyana, will pay off.

You have been given the chance to progress your careers through the education you have received, but it's now up to you what you do next – nobody else. In the case of my friend Professor Singh, it was based on his study at The University of Guyana that he progressed to study at The University of St Andrews, one of the UK's most preeminent institutions. He then went on to reach the rank of professor and was the first member of staff at Central Lancashire to obtain a DSc – the highest award any UK university can give and one that recognises international standing and impact. Professor Singh used the education UG had given to help create his future.

In this context I would like to talk briefly about the three Cs:

If you want to make a change it usually starts with having to make a choice. You have to decide what you want to achieve, what you want to change, then make a choice about whether you are going to try and achieve it. So change needs action, it needs choice – it won't happen on its own. Many people fail before they start because they don't make that choice. So change means making a choice.



*Professor David Phoenix OBE,  
Vice-Chancellor of London South Bank University*

But I said there were three Cs; the third is chance. Be willing to take a chance and follow your passion. Don't take the easy route, and don't let others define your limits. The greatest rewards often come from making the hardest choices, and so many people fail to achieve not because they are unable but because they let others set their limits or they are too scared of failure to try and achieve their dream. I say to you: use the privilege of education, don't waste it, and be willing to take the hard way.

So three Cs: to make change, make a choice, and be willing to take a chance to achieve your dreams.

Who has heard of Thomas Edison, one of the world's most famous inventors? Thomas Edison's teachers said he was "too stupid to learn anything". He was even fired from his first two jobs for being "non-productive". But he wanted to be an inventor. Edison made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb. Edison's friend and associate Walter S. Mallory said one day: "Isn't it a shame that with the tremendous amount of work you have done, you haven't been able to get any results." Edison responded by saying: "I didn't fail; I just found over 1,000 ways that didn't work." Edison became one of the greatest inventors. He developed electric power, sound recording and motion pictures – to name but a few things. He found what he loved doing, and he focused on what he thought was possible. He didn't give up, he didn't take the easy route, and he didn't let others define him. He took the hard route and it changed the world.

*"I didn't fail; I just found over 1,000 ways that didn't work."*

I ask you to do the same. When you leave this room, leave with pride in what you have achieved but go out, dream big dreams and then follow those dreams. Don't let anybody else set limits on your ambition and don't be scared of following the hardest route – that is the one that can generate the most reward.

So change won't just happen; it represents choice. Use your gift of education wisely and be willing to take that choice – that hard way – however small, and make a difference to yourselves, your families and your society.

Just before I finish I would like to say a few more words about The University of Guyana. I looked up the original vision, which was: "To discover, generate, disseminate, and apply knowledge of the highest standard for the service of the community, the nation, and of all mankind." Those founders recognised the importance of the country having its own university and they created an ambitious vision, one where The University of Guyana would not only support the local people but one in which this country's university would rise to serve mankind. The world today faces many challenges – economic, environmental and political. We need that vision to be reinvigorated now more than ever. My generation and those before haven't left things in a good state. I commend the work the University of Guyana has done and is doing in support of the local community and people of Guyana. As a friend of Guyana I would, though, like to make two suggestions:

I have a strong belief that countries should do all they can to ensure everyone has access to the transformational power of education and the opportunities this provides. You are the educated elite. As we celebrate your success we should remember that many do not have the opportunity you have enjoyed. I hope UG will continue to remove barriers to education. But the world has changed over the last 50 years and no one organisation can deliver all the education a country requires. And what of those who have been failed by the system?

At my own university in London we have now opened a college to support the local people and so enabling the university to focus on developing national and international impact in higher education. Many of its students have not yet achieved success, but they have talent and through that talent I see them achieve great things. With government support there is the potential for The University of Guyana to work towards helping to create a national college that could provide learning pathways to higher education and which could deliver vocational skills that would underpin the country's economic development and help more people reach new levels. Countries across the globe are recognising the need for an appropriate mix of vocational and academic study and Guyana has the chance to develop a holistic model for tertiary education for the benefit of its people and for industry and the professions. What is clear is that university education in the future needs to understand where it sits in the educational continuum and how this supports people, business and wider

society. If The University of Guyana is to ensure it continues to provide the service to the community that its founders envisaged, it will need to provide leadership to develop this educational ecosystem so there is educational opportunity for all. Our ambition should be that nobody is left behind.

But this will mean looking at how economic growth can be achieved so that funds are created for investment in healthcare, education and other areas. Many countries are developing the concept of an industrial strategy; this would be a strategy that considers how Guyana can benefit from its own resources and how its unique global position could be of great benefit to people. It would ensure the county develops the facilities to refine its materials rather than exporting them, and would create a framework for The University of Guyana to invest in the skills local people need to run those facilities and to attract new business to

the country. This application and dissemination of knowledge to areas of national need could be transformational and help ensure that The University of Guyana remains a driver for change as indeed it was in the early years of its creation. There is the potential through this route for The University of Guyana to become a leading enterprise-focused university. I commend the work the Vice-Chancellor and his colleagues are doing in this area. With the support of an ambitious study framework and vocational pathways, achievements will be even greater.

I have been a supporter of The University of Guyana for many years. I am proud to be associated with this university. It is a university that transforms lives. The impact of that transformation I see in my friends and colleagues. I see the power of The University of Guyana in the audience sat before me today. I say again it is a privilege to be associated with this university and an honour to be here today to celebrate great success and the success of those receiving their honorary awards.

I hope The University of Guyana and its officers get the support needed to take the university forward, so that the vision of the founders is fully realised. I ask you all to be thankful for the education you have received and use the opportunity it gives to make a difference, no matter how small. Don't waste the privilege you have been given. I congratulate you all on your achievements and on your behalf I thank the staff of The University of Guyana for their work in making that possible. And I thank your friends and relations who have stood by you for providing the support that has helped you to achieve your success. Today is as much a celebration for them as for you.

*Once again many congratulations and I wish you every success for the future.*



*Professor Ivelaw L. Griffith, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of The University of Guyana and Professor David Phoenix OBE, Vice-Chancellor of London South Bank University*

# Congratulations! Staff members who graduated at the 2018 52nd convocation



# Three graduation ceremonies for the 52nd Convocation of the Turkeyen campus were held on November 10, 2018













## Feature Address by Dr Bibi Areefa Alladin-Karan at The University of Guyana Berbice Campus 17th Convocation on November 17, 2018 at Tain

First of all let me extend congratulations to the graduating class of 2018. Well done, you have made it. I was tasked to deliver a speech that is supposed to be motivational, inspirational and real, so I decided to talk about my life.



When I was a little girl, I had no dreams of attending a university. I didn't even know what a university was. All I knew was that I had to go to school and pass every test with first place since nothing else was acceptable in my house. I was born into a family who are rice and cattle farmers for many generations, but they knew the value of education. What was most impactful in my life was that I had parents who knew the values and core principles in raising children. My mom ensured that we had everything needed for school, including home-cooked food three times daily – we were well fed. My dad, on the other hand, did one thing that made us all successful. He didn't do the homework etc., but he rewarded us for our grades and positions at the end of each term with cash and gifts. So basically I was paid to be smart in the beginning. It eventually became a norm so I never settled for anything less than the best. The money stopped flowing as we got older, but by then being the best was already engrained in me.

I was never ambitious as a child – in fact, I grew up among cane cutters. I was also gullible as a child and fascinated by the canvas water-bottle bag that cane cutters carried to work, so I asked for one. My father told me that the only way I can get one is if I become a cane cutter so from there on my only life goal was to cut cane. Aim for the stars and fall on a cloud didn't work for me, as I aimed for the ground and worked my way up. Thank heavens I got my very own canvas water bottle for my birthday two years ago from a dear friend – so, for me, dreams do come true.

We had no television or phones during my childhood in the eighties. I remember when television was introduced to the Guyana market we begged my father to buy one. He was not a poor man and could have afforded to but he didn't buy it. Instead, he told my brother who was writing Common Entrance that year that if he did well we would get a television. Low and behold he topped Region 5 and we got a television. There was only one television channel so we begged for a VCR. Of course he refused to buy the

VCR and so we watched that one channel until my elder sister wrote Common Entrance a year later and we got one. My younger sister got her very own BMX bike when she passed Common Entrance and made it to President's College. So that's basically how we got things as kids.

My point is; nothing was given to us freely. We were made to earn everything as children. Not because he couldn't afford it but because we were being taught the value of working for our own and hence we valued everything we had. It is important that children are molded at a very young age to become productive members of society. What you teach and expose a child to in the first seven years of life will have the greatest impact on their lives and this is scientifically proven by many researchers.

Be examples: remember that children look up to adults as role models. Remember that what we do affects the world. Always be accountable for your actions and ask yourself how your actions will impact the lives of those you love and care for. When you make a choice to do something, think of the greater good that will come from it. Never be selfish. Your greatest gift on this earth is service to others, in service comes gratitude.

My education in Berbice was in no way inferior to those of my colleagues from Georgetown. New Amsterdam Multilateral School, and by extension Berbice, has produced many outstanding professionals who hold senior positions in Guyana and in the wider world. Raise your heads up high as Berbicians who are educated in Berbice. There are many easier routes to medicine but I am glad that I took the longer one. I learned the discipline of professionalism and the development of relationships that have become so important to me now. This has made me much more mature as a medical student and as a doctor. Certain things cannot be short-changed in life; like maturity, they come with age and experience. Medical school was no walk in the park. I considered quitting every year. I had real books with endless pages and limited access to computers. Eventually five years ended, I had minimal social life but I graduated top of my class – gaining the Valedictorian and Prime Minister's Medal, among others.

After deciding that I had achieved enough academically, I got married during my internship and moved back to Berbice where I decided to start a family instead of furthering my career. I worked at New Amsterdam Hospital during my pregnancy after which I quit my job to enjoy motherhood for a year. There is a time and place for everything and we must learn to balance work and life. I am glad that I was able to do that.

My fairytale love life was shattered in 2015. As a wife, a mother, a best friend for 16 years – and most of all as a doctor – I watched my husband walk into the emergency unit of Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) and 20 minutes later be placed on life support. It was numbing to know that with all the knowledge, expertise and resources accessible to me, he would die. I sat there and whilst doubting that it was happening, we organised a massive blood drive – hoping that his life would have been saved since he was A-negative blood type, which is rare, and to complicate it further it was a three-day holiday weekend.

I organised a medical evacuation to the USA as a last resort, even though I knew that it was pointless. The consultants sat me

down and said to me that my husband had 100 percent mortality, meaning that nothing could be done to save him. I sat by his bedside and prayed that God take charge and do what was best for him. Within 20 minutes his heart stopped and I became widowed. Only one day prior to this we were planning our New Year's Eve celebrations.

My husband had a degree in biology also from The University of Guyana but his love was farming. We had many discussions about moving away from farming when there was the bird flu outbreak but we never did. Eventually he died from leptospirosis, which he acquired from the farm. I thought of a million other ways that this could have turned out differently but there was only one ending.

The days seemed endless, time stood still, the pain got worse every day and no matter how much I tried, I woke up every morning feeling the same deep, nagging, endless pain over and over and over. I knew what it is like to wish that I was better off dead and that it will end my pain. I was angry at my dead husband for taking the easy way out and leaving me here to hurt this much. I was angry at the world. I was angry at God. I had all the love and support from my family and friends, I had counselling, but it was the toughest time in my life. I know what grief feels like, and there is no book or lecture that can prepare you for that.

I was also five months away from writing my exams for my Masters in Paediatrics. I was an A student who was left now with my life in shambles, not knowing what will happen. I attempted to go to work every day but I couldn't make it because my husband died where I worked.

Merely driving into the compound led me to a meltdown. My boss, Dr. Bowman, lent me his shoulder to cry on and we prayed together. He kept telling me everything happens for a reason and that I would understand this later and to just trust in God. I thought of taking the year off from work and studies but then I realised that I would have more idle time to be sad so I picked myself up and went back to work and eventually every day was a little better. I decided that I would write the exam for him and I would give it my best shot so I started studying one month prior. What made the difference was that I had completed my program requirements in the first two years so all I really needed to do was pass the exam. Being on top of the game always pays off.

Fast forward, the days got better. I wrote my exams and graduated for the third time from The University of Guyana with my Master's Degree in Paediatrics, all the while working and raising my child as a single mother. I prayed about it and I began to see things differently. Subconsciously, I started to value things. My time was so precious now and I ensured that I spent it on the people and things that I love. My senses became heightened and I am able to appreciate little things, like birds chirping and the colours of flowers, and what is surprising to me is that the lyrics of music that I listened to all my life had meaning now. What I summed up this transition to be is something called gratitude.

I became thankful for everything that happened to me. I started talking about my husband without crying and I simply smiled at his memories. I bragged about how blessed I am to have experienced unconditional love that people search for their whole lives. I started thanking God for bringing him into my life and giving me my son, Liam, to complete me as I go on this journey. I feel now like I am the luckiest person alive. Coming out of a tragic loss and the worst depression, I became a better person and I wouldn't

change a thing.

My experience has made me a better person in every aspect. I deal with death all the time in my job but I never understood what it did to families. Now, when I tell families that their child will die or is dead, I can sit with them, and I can cry with them, and I can comfort them. When they look at me and say that I am an average doctor doing my job and say I don't understand what they are going through, I smile internally because I understand everything since I have lived it already. I am able to show empathy and compassion and counsel my patients and relatives better now.

Through this journey I have discovered that I am one amazing woman – I am unstoppable. I embark on tasks and I get them done 100 percent of the time. Every day I am asked, how do you do it? I teach, I work, I sit on many committees, I am an active researcher and I am a homemaker most of all – and I pride myself on that. I have a son who eats curried chicken and roti almost every day and refuses to buy food at school. He has the stomach of a Berbician farmer.

Today, I hold many roles and titles. I didn't let my circumstances define me nor did I victimise myself for all that I went through along my journey. I have hit rock bottom so I know what that feels like and can appreciate happiness because I understand sadness.

I live by certain principles that have made me who I am and encourage you here today to practice good habits:

1. The famous Aristotle quote says: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit." Start your day right:

get up early, pray, meditate, exercise, drink a glass of water and have a good breakfast. This sets the pace for a productive day. I make a to-do list daily and I ensure that it is complete at the end of each day and nothing spills over. I stay up at nights if I have to, so that I can finish it. These little habits make the most difference.

2. Surround yourself with good people. I have found out that the people you interact with the most will have the greatest impact on your life. Always choose good company who will teach you something, who will make you better and who will influence you positively. "Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are," my mom always said that and I understand the importance of it now. Find your rock and be a rock in someone's life. My sister is mine. There are toxic people out there and we can't always save them all. Know when to draw the line. Eleanor Roosevelt said, and I live by this, "Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people." This has been instrumental in me choosing my very close circle.

3. I encourage you to smile. Smile more often as smiling makes us happy by releasing chemicals in the body that combat stress. Smiling is contagious and it is also good for your facial muscles. Prophet Mohammed said: "Your smile for your brother is charity" (Al-Tirmidhi 1879).

4. Be confident, know your worth. Too many times I see women put up with abuse just because they accept it as a way of life. Remember that you must love yourself before you can give love to anyone. Tell yourself that you are beautiful, smart, amazing and blessed. And don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise. I am often asked why I am so confident in myself and I say "Why not?" My parents bragged about my smarts and beauty as a child so I grew up with that confidence and my husband encouraged it. If I wasn't already lucky enough, my son, who is a real charmer, says that I

**"Great minds discuss ideas;  
average minds discuss events;  
small minds discuss people."**

am very cute. He reciprocated his father's trait and I am so lucky to have him. Children reciprocate what they see and experience. Let that be good for them. Don't expose them to negativity; build their confidence from a young age. Tell them how much you love them, how proud you are of them and how smart they are. Liam discovered the mohawk hairstyle from Emrit in CPL this year. The other day he combed it and then said "Mom, I look like Emrit" then he said, "Actually, I look better than Emrit". That's confidence.

5. Learn to say 'Okay' or 'No' to people when you have to. A close friend of mine taught me that I would be less stressed if I just said 'Okay' to many comments rather than rebutting. Know which battles are worth fighting. I have fought too many battles in one lifetime and I have developed the art of detecting those that are worth fighting and those that you should pass up. Listen to your instinct, it is always right – 100 percent of the time. I learnt this the hard way and now my gut feeling is most important.

6. Don't take things personally and don't have expectations. It took me a few books and many audio lectures to understand this concept but I finally got it. When people do things, either good or bad, it reflects who they are as an individual and their personality. Remain indifferent and never have expectations. I have realised that expectation is the greatest cause of despair.

7. Dream big, go out there, and have plans – don't ever say it is impossible. Set goals and work towards them, and make a bucket list. Understand that your subconscious can work even when you are not. Plant seeds in the universe as energy is never destroyed – your thoughts matter. After graduating from The University of Guyana for the third time in 2016, I told my family that I would not subject them to another graduation exercise at The University of Guyana unless I am faculty on stage. This was my goal for age 60. Here I am at 35 years – two years after my last graduation – back on UG's stage at a graduation ceremony for the fourth time but now giving a keynote and I am faculty. I am living 60 at 35.

8. Lose yourself in service to this planet, as service is the most rewarding thing there is. Volunteer as much as you can. Help keep the environment clean by planting a tree or your own garden. Every Berbician should have a kitchen garden. "Do it for the love, not for the likes" as Chronixx said. When people ask me why I am still at GPHC after all these years, I say it's the most rewarding thing that I can do with my life. I get to deliver care to the less fortunate children and to teach and mentor medical students at the same time. Remember to pass your knowledge on. It is because of great teachers like Dr. Doobay, Dr. Madan Rambaran and Mr. Amir, who molded me, that I can stand here today. Little things like helping the neighborhood kids with their homework and keeping lessons in the villages will make a dramatic difference. You will soon be graduates; act as graduates and carry yourself with dignity. Make The University of Guyana proud and make this country proud. When I am asked by visiting professors from all over the world where I studied, I proudly say: The University of Guyana. Most of them are unaware that we have postgraduate programmes and

they are always impressed. Don't ever talk down this institution that made you who you are. Volunteer and become teachers. It is a cycle and we have a duty to continue it.

9. There is a saying: "Love what you do until you do what you love." Whenever you go into a new job or embark on a journey, it may not be what you wanted or expected but always give it 100 percent and you will impress your leaders enough to take chances on you. If you are going to do it, do it right!

10. Other things that will make you successful are travelling and reading. When you travel, you meet new people, understand new cultures and open up your minds to new possibilities – so explore Guyana and the wider world. There are many Guyanese who have travelled to the USA and Canada but have never seen Kaieteur Falls, much less the Rupununi or Leguan. Don't save all of your money; live, as tomorrow is never guaranteed. Read; it sharpens your vocabulary and knowledge. Become readers and see how it will transform you and help you answer Jeopardy! questions.

The last book that I read was *The Alchemist*, and it was a truly breathtaking experience.

11. My most important lesson that I have learned at this stage of my life, from all of my cumulative experiences, is to be grateful and full of gratitude. I listen to Joel Osteen on my way to work every morning and it sets my day. Be thankful and never complain about how bad things are. Look at the glass half full and not half empty. Be an optimist and not a pessimist. Be thankful for your life because many others didn't make it this far. Be thankful for your family; you are stuck with them for life so love them unconditionally. Be thankful that you have food and other necessities that many others lack. Be thankful that you live in Guyana where there are no natural disasters, the

weather is amazing and we have bountiful resources. Remember that things can only get better; they always do. Never doubt anything in your life. Everything happens for a reason and to teach us something. Always ask yourself: what is this trying to teach me? What did I learn from this experience? Go forth and make us proud. Make yourself proud, make your family proud, make The University of Guyana proud and, most of all, make Guyana proud.

I take pride in being Guyanese and I take pride in the education that I received from The University of Guyana. Everything that I have achieved was because of hard work and commitment. I enjoy what I do and I have a good quality of life. It can be quite frustrating at times, but life is no bed of roses and is simply what you make of it. You are the author so don't let anyone else write your story. I have learned that you have to maintain high standards and consistency in every aspect of life. Malcolm X said: "If you stand for nothing, you will fall for anything." Stand for something.

My charge is for you to lose yourself in service to this soil. Martin Luther King Jr. said: "Not everybody can be famous but everybody can be great because greatness is determined by service."

*Congratulations and thank you.*



# The 17th Convocation of the Tain campus was held on November 17, 2018, in Berbice





# Turkeyen and Tain Talks 14: Juvenile Justice in Guyana



From left, members of the panel: Mr Stephan Apple, a former New Opportunity Corp student and member of the Guyana Defence Force Coast Guard; Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards, Acting Chancellor of the Judiciary; Ms Nicole Whaul, Interviewer and Counsellor, Child Advocacy Centre; Dr Dawn Stewart, Psychology Lecturer at The University of Guyana; Ms Marva Langevine, a Spanish teacher; and Dr Katija Khan, Neuropsychologist at The University of the West Indies

The 14th edition of the Turkeyen and Tain Talks, entitled 'A Better Life for Youth: Juvenile Justice in Guyana', was held at Pegasus Hotel on September 21, 2018, alongside a soft launch of Child-LinK's report 'Cries in the Dark - Child Sexual Abuse in Guyana Today'.

Professor Michael Scott, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academic Engagement, noted the importance of such a discussion not only for an academic institution like The University of Guyana, but also for the community and nation as a whole: "When our nation's children cry, it's a cry for the future."

Honourable Minister of Public Security Khemraj Ramjattan said that the Juvenile Justice Act was passed to enable a better life for youths. It contains an international set of principles but with a local perspective. No juvenile will suffer imprisonment, he assured those present. Previously, it was either imprisonment or a fine, however the system has been adjusted and a more sensitive and sensible programme was designed. The minister noted that the Ministry of Public Security has drafted and costed a bill for the Youth Court. In addition, the entry age for the New Opportunity Corp (NOC) is now 14 and individuals will enter on issues related to drugs in school, drug use and drug trafficking. The NOC has also adopted an educational, family approach to dealing with delinquent behavior. This, he explained, will give youths a second chance and an opportunity to reintegrate into society.

Dr Katija Khan, a neuropsychologist at The University of the West Indies, explained that we need to examine the situation from a psychological perspective and understand that: 1) Youths are fundamentally different from adults, therefore we have to evaluate them based on their developmental stage and social concept,



From left: Honourable Minister of Public Security, Khemraj Ramjattan; UNICEF Representative in Guyana and Suriname, Ms Sylvie Fouet; and UN Resident Representative to Guyana, Ms Mikiko Tanaka



*A section of the audience*

and encourage their potential instead of administering punishment. 2) There is no bad child but rather a set of factors that cause delinquency e.g. family problems, mental health issues, being bullied at school and community pressures. 3) One size does not fit all: the approach to dealing with the issue varies, therefore we have to treat the one with the highest risk of offending. 4) It will take a village: it's a collaborative effort involving social workers etc., and techniques and tools have to be developed to deal with the issue. 5) What we repeatedly say to children becomes their inner voice; all children have potential, how we communicate to them is important. As American social reformer Frederick Douglass said: "It is easier to build strong children than repair broken men".

In 2018, the UN launched its youth strategy 'Youth 2030: Working With and For Young People', plus the Generation Unlimited partnership initiative to "ensure that every young person is in education, learning, training or employment by 2030." Taking a holistic approach, Unicef



*A section of the audience*

has helped achieve three milestones in Guyana said representative Ms Sylvie Fouet: the passing of the Juvenile Justice

Act; will be raising the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14, and promoting the use of detention as a last resort.

Dr Dawn Stewart, who lectures in psychology at The University of Guyana, similarly advocated for rehabilitation and not punishment, so that children can go back into society as responsible adults. A number of factors cause children to be rebellious and become delinquent, such as domestic violence, poverty and fractured homes. She advised that the social protection office conducts classes for parents to help them regulate their children's behaviour. She applauded the Child Care and Protection Agency for doing a good job of reintegrating children into society. With the support of parents, the community and the education system, structural systems need to be in place to guide the recovery process of juveniles and see the dignity and worth of the child.

Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards, Acting Chancellor of the Judiciary, shared her belief that children need to be treated as children in the justice system and not adults. We need to focus on educational rehabilitation, she said. Following the ascension of the Juvenile Offenders Act, a youth court is to be set up to deal with juvenile cases. Justice Cummings-Edwards explained that only serious cases will come to the court and the Director of Public Prosecution will do a pre-charge screening, with a focus on conflict resolution, habitation, education and reintegration into society. The court, she noted, must be guided by these principles - "With the best interest of the child". Par-

ents must be involved and the child must be treated fairly, be able to participate in

the process and be heard. There will be respect for gender, ethnicity and cultural differences; and supervision and rehabilitation for reintegration into society.

The event also saw the launch of a new report by ChildLinK, an organisation advocating for the protection and rights of the child. The Childcare and Protection Agency reported approximately 574 cases of child sexual assault in 2013 and 841 in 2017, a 46 percent increase over the four-year period. Kaiesha Douglas-Perry, Co-ordinator of ChildLinK's Child Advocacy Centre (CAC), said adults have a duty to protect our children from this devastating



*Professor Michael Scott,  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Office of Academic  
Engagement, University of Guyana*

act of violence. According to the report, 'Cries in the Dark - Child Sexual Abuse in Guyana Today', 84 percent of the child victims reported to the CAC alleged abuse by family members or known persons from the community. We need to have a national plan to invest in child advocacy centres and we also need to train civil society, said Ms Douglas-Perry.

The other presenters were Ms Marva Langevine, a Spanish teacher and recipient of a Queen's Young Leaders Award, who spoke about 'Care for Juveniles in Grief'; and Mr Stephan Apple, a former New Opportunity Corp student who is now employed at the Guyana Defence Force Coast Guard service. He shared his success story of 'Why Second Chances Are Important'.

The Turkeyen and Tain Talks are organised by the Office of Philanthropy, Alumni and Civic Engagement. The programme was moderated by Mr Clarence Brotherson, lecturer in the Centre for Communication Studies, University of Guyana.

# Conversations on Law and Society

## Marijuana and Guyana

The Seventh 'Conversation on Law and Society' was held on October 17, 2018, at the Umana Yana in Georgetown, and focused on the topic: Marijuana and Guyana. Leading the conversation was Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Dean of the Faculty of Law at The University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus.

University of Guyana Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ivelaw Griffith, quoted Albert Einstein – "We cannot solve a problem with the same thinking we used when we created it" – to explain how we as a society need to examine and approach the topic of marijuana



*A section of the audience*

in Guyana. We need to examine this issue as a multidimensional one, he noted. There needs to be a transnational conversation, the

**"Declassify marijuana as a dangerous drug ... what governments and policy makers need to do is to control marijuana and regulate the law to restrict its accessibility"**  
**– Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine**

conversation cannot be limited to Guyana. Thus the importance of starting the conversation with Professor Belle Antoine.

The discussion about marijuana should be guided by research and studied by the Caricom community, explained Dr Douglas Slater, Assistant Secretary-General in the Directorate for Human and Social Development, Caricom, during his remarks. The conversation should not be limited to Rastafarians, but rather examine the classification of the drug and its use. In some societies, for example, marijuana is used as a herb.

It's a controversial topic, but marks a timely intervention by The University of Guyana, Dr Slater noted. There is a regional approach by a Caricom commission, however Guyana is the most punitive country in terms of its approach to marijuana and the social impact on youths. Decision makers need to be objective and guided by scientific information, he explained. Regional scientists have proven the benefits of marijuana as a medicinal product through



*Dr Douglas Slater, Assistant Secretary-General in the Directorate for Human and Social Development, Caricom*

the creation of drugs Amasol and Canasol, which have marijuana components. The social impact, on the other hand, can be detrimental. Therefore societies need to examine the medical, social and legal impacts of marijuana.

Professor Belle Antoine said there is a lot of support in the region for legal reform on the issue of marijuana, and there have been adjustments to the law in a few countries in the Caribbean. Polls show that 61 percent in Grenada want law reform (2018), 63 percent in



*From left: Dr William Adu-Krow, PAHO/WHO Country Representative; Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Dean of the Faculty of Law at The University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus; Vice-Chancellor of UG, Professor Ivelaw Griffith; Ms Krysta Bisnauth, Political Analyst at the Canadian High Commission*

Barbados (2017), and 62 percent in Antigua (2016). Persons want to change the law to have access to marijuana for medicinal purposes, and to capitalise on economic opportunities.

The Conversations on Law and Society series is a platform for invited participants and the general public to examine the legal ramifications of social issues and the social implications of legal issues through research and reflection, dialogue and debate – providing opportunities for the university and the public to share ideas and contribute to positive change in our society.

The programme was chaired by Ms Nikki Cole, Senior International Engagement Officer, Office of Planning and International



*Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Dean of the Faculty of Law at The University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus*

Engagement, while the discussion was moderated by Mr Teni Housty, Attorney at Law and lecturer at UG. Participants in the conversation included Vice-Chancellor Griffith, Ms Krysta Bisnauth, Political Analyst at the Canadian High Commission; and Dr William Adu-Krow, PAHO/WHO Country Representative. Greetings were also extended by Ras Khafra Mesesdjehuti on behalf of the Guyana Rastafari Council.



*A section of the audience*

The event was organised by the University of Guyana's Office of Planning and International Engagement, which is responsible for leading and supporting planning, monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance; as well as promoting, facilitating and managing partnerships with international development agencies and academic institutions in other countries.

## SAVE THE DATES

### To be announced

*The Second Dr Ulric Neville Trotz  
Distinguished Lecture*

### Friday, March 22, 2019

*The launch of "Dave: The Documentary on Life and Work of Musical Icon Dave Martins"*

produced by the University of Guyana's Artist- in-Residence Programme,  
The Theatre Guild, Kingston, Georgetown

### Friday, March 29, 2019

*Launching of "Ameena Gafoors' Bibliography of Guyanese Writers (Hansib, London 2018)*

Theatre Guild.  
18:00h-20:00h

### Wednesday, April 10, 2019 - Friday, April 12, 2019

*3rd Undergraduate Research Conferences*

April 10 - Lecturer Conference, Turkeyen Campus

April 11 - Student Conference, Turkeyen Campus

April 12 - Student Conference, Tain Campus

### Tuesday, April 16, 2019

*The Ninth Conversation on Law and Society  
Sovereign Wealth Fund: For Our Prosperity and Our  
Posterity,*

The Umana Yana, Kingston, Georgetown  
17:00h

### Sunday, May 12, 2019

*RACE FOR PACE 3*

Annual Fund Raising Go-Kart Race for the Student Support Fund (SSF), GMRSC Track, Thomas lands  
10:00h - 16:00h

### Sunday, July 21, 2019 – Thursday, July 25, 2019

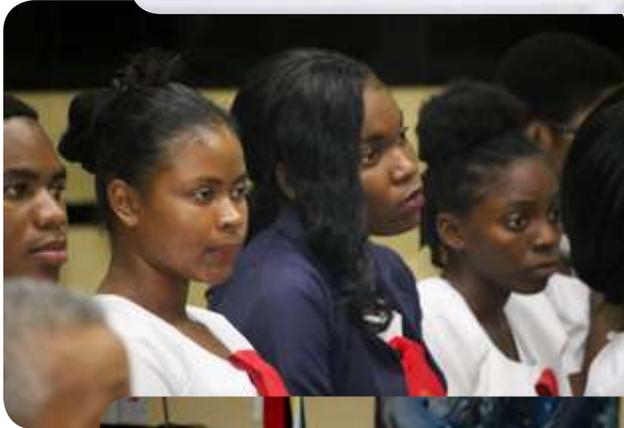
*Diaspora/ Entrepreneurship Conference*

Building a New Business Paradigm:  
Engaging the Diaspora for an Enhanced Caribbean  
Competitive Landscape

Venue: Ramada Georgetown Princess

# The VC's Renaissance Lecture X and Panel Discussion were held on November 19, 2018

## Titled: Guyana on the International Stage



# The inaugural batch of Students for the Masters in Social Work programme presented their Practice Research Papers on December 5, 2018



# Transitioning to a green economy

The Department of Economics, within the Faculty of Social Sciences, collaborated with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to hold a presentation entitled 'Greening with Jobs: World Employment and Social Outlook' on October 23, 2018, in the Education Lecture Theatre at The University of Guyana.



*Mr Sydney Armstrong, Head of the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, UG*

Mr Sydney Armstrong, Head of the Department of Economics, told the gathering that the Government of Guyana, researchers, policy holders and advisers need to have a discussion on policy in reference to economic development and sustainability. We need to focus on transformation to new industries, he continued. This will disrupt our systems, however we have to embrace those disruptions in order to transition towards a green economy. Additionally, we need to embrace digital transformation. It means a shift in our thinking and approach to development.



*Mr Rawle Small, International Labour Organization consultant*

Mr Rawle Small, ILO consultant, co-authored the reports 'Skills for Green Jobs' and 'Labour and Employment Implications for Transitioning to a Green Economy in Guyana', which serves as a guide

towards a green economy. According to the 'Skills for Green Jobs' report: "The right skills for green jobs are the prerequisite to make the transition to a greener economy happen. There is a skills gap in a number of sectors, such as renewable energy, energy and resource efficiency, renovation of building, construction, environmental services, manufacturing etc. The adoption and dissemination of clean technologies require skills in technology application, adaptation and maintenance. Skills are also crucial for economies and businesses, workers and entrepreneurs, to rapidly adapt to changes as a consequence of environmental policies or climate change."

Having the right skills for the job is vital. Mr Small said that students of the university should understand the technical aspects of business, and thus develop an entrepreneurial spirit. More dialogue is also needed with industry practitioners who can mentor students on a number of issues, such as skills, labour challenges and labour costs. Mr Small called for



*A section of the audience*



*A section of the audience*

more faculty/departmental initiatives by The University of Guyana to help students understand the dynamics of the labour market.



*Guillermo Montt, Senior Economist in the Research Department of the International Labour Organization*

Guillermo Montt, Senior Economist in the Research Department of the ILO, explained that if a country is to experience high economic development there is also need for human development. Human development is essential for Guyana because of outward migration. The current challenges Guyana faces as a nation are: 1) skills deficit; 2) lack of skills assessment needed to transition to a green economy;

and 3) occupational health and safety legislation to protect workers.

The advent of climate change increases the likelihood of disasters, which reduce productivity and cause economic activity to stop. The world of work recognises, therefore, that sustainability is urgent. Structural transformation, equivalent to an industry revolution, is needed – including diversification of the economy. Diversification will include sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, building and construction, forestry, energy, waste management, and transportation. We have to tap into these areas because they hold great opportunities for development, said Mr Montt.

# University of Guyana Press launches its first book: *'Dynamics of Caribbean Diaspora Engagement: People, Policy, Practice'* on December 13, 2018

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# Recognising a Guyanese Icon

Dr Yesu Persaud has a long and distinguished career that spans many decades and continents. He has spearheaded several successful business ventures and implemented highly impactful civic and philanthropic works. To recognise, celebrate and honour the seminal contributions of this Guyanese icon, The University of Guyana launched a lecture series. The first in the series was a symposium titled 'A Life of Audacious Authenticity in Business, Entrepreneurship and Civic Life' on October 23, 2018, at Pegasus Hotel.

greatly impacted the lives of many Guyanese and this is one of the ways UG wishes to express its gratitude for his contribution to business and philanthropy.

Professor Ivelaw Griffith, Vice-Chancellor of The University of Guyana, described Dr Persaud as an audacious giant, noting: "Success is the child of audacity. The likelihood of success is not great if you are not audacious". Dr Yesu Persaud's life story, he continued, can serve as a guide to all students – especially business



*University of Guyana management staff and members of the panel*

Professor Leyland Lucas, Dean of the School of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation, noted that persons are often recognised after they are no longer with us – quoting a poem by Brian Clough: "Don't give me flowers when I'm dead. If you like me, send them when I'm alive". Dr Yesu Persaud, he said, has

students of the university – on the importance of perseverance and never giving up on a dream. Through this lecture series, the name and life's work of Dr Persaud will spread.

Hector Butts, former Finance Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, said he was humbled to celebrate with a stalwart, noting: "I celebrate you, Yesu Persaud – always calm, gentle, and clear. We identify not by instruction but by direction. You took Demerara Distillers Limited from a rocky, leaking ship – a shaky ship – and with determination you piloted the vessel through the stormy sea ... DDL represents the hallmark of your skills. You place Guyana on the map as a brand. I admire your good governance, property, compliance and respect."



*A section of the audience*

Professor Paloma Mohamed, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Philanthropy, Alumni and Civic Engagement at UG, presented an overview of Dr Persaud's life on behalf of Dr Ian McDonald. She also noted that she has known Dr Persaud for 40 years and extended a special thank you to him for his personal kindness, warmth, affection, friendship and tremendous contribution to the development of Guyana. She deemed him the most respected man in Guyana – the perfect example of what a good citizen should be



*From left: Professor Jaipaul Singh, Professor of Physiology and Research in the School of Forensic and Applied Sciences, University of Central Lancashire; Dr Yesu Persaud and Professor Ivelaw Griffith*

and a man of great integrity. She also acknowledged his success in the creation of the Institute of Private Enterprise Development (IPED), a nonprofit enterprise that seeks to serve Guyana and its economic development.

Mr Ramesh Persaud, Chief Executive Officer of IPED, spoke about Dr Persaud in business; Pro-Chancellor of The University of Guyana Major General Ret'd Joe Singh spoke about his civic and political contributions; while Professor David Dabydeen – broadcaster, novelist, poet and academic – spoke about his in-



*From left: Ms Patricia Bacchus, Chief Executive Officer, Caribbean Containers; Vice-Chancellor of UG, Professor Ivelaw Griffith; and Dr Yesu Persaud share a light moment*

ternational impact. Other speakers were Professor Jaipaul Singh, Professor of Physiology and Research in the School of Forensic and Applied Sciences, University of Central Lancashire; former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Senator of Barbados, Ms Maxine McClean; DDL Chairman Komal Samaroo; Mr Stanley Ming, CEO and Founder of Mings Products and Services Limited and Isika Construction and Engineering; and Ms Isabelle De Caires, Moray House Trust.



*From left: Vice-Chancellor of UG, Professor Ivelaw Griffith; Professor Leyland Lucas, Dean of the School of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation; and Professor Michael Scott, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Engagement of UG, prepare to hand over a portrait by artist Michael Griffith to Dr Yesu Persaud as a token of appreciation*

# Food and Nutrition security a priority for UG

The University of Guyana launched the Institute for Food and Nutrition Security (IFANS) on October 25, 2018, at the Arthur Chung Convention Centre, and an exhibition under the theme: 'From Farm to Fork – Food and Nutrition Security for the Green State'.

Presentations were held on the topics: Policy to Practice for Social Development; Social and Economic Dimensions of Food and Nutrition Security; Agro-Business; Food and Nutrition Security and Education; Looking Towards a Research Agenda; Harvesting Natural Resources for Food Nutraceuticals and Pharmaceuticals; Trade and Export Considerations; and Public Health Considerations.



*Honourable Minister of Agriculture,  
Noel Holder*

The chair of the event, former UG registrar Mr Vincent Alexander, noted that food and nutrition security is high on the university's agenda. As the university goes through a period of renaissance, he explained, he sees a step towards a renewal and rebirth of self-sufficiency in food. Not just self-sufficiency in food, but sufficiency in the right foods.



*Mr Owen Bovell, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture  
and Forestry, UG*



*Honourable Minister of Education,  
Nicolette Henry*

Though Guyana produces a lot of food, we need to be cognisant that we also waste a lot of food. In addition, we import food that is either processed or canned, which depletes the nutritional value. There needs to be more evidence-based research for policy makers to assess food needs in tandem with nutritional needs. The launch of the institution is therefore timely, noted

are not only a concern for policy makers, politicians, business people or The University of Guyana but rather all citizens of Guyana. Through this institution, UG has an opportunity to collaborate and extend the engagement with multiple partners in and outside of Guyana.

Prior to the launch of the institution, consultations were held with Professor Leonard O'Garro, Founding Director of the Centre for Food Security and Entrepreneurship, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill; and Professor Verian Thomas, Associate Dean for Recruitment, Student Support and Alumni Affairs, College of Agriculture and Food Sciences, Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University, who served as co-chairs of the Feasibility Study Team. Listening sessions were also held around Guyana to determine the food and availability needs of people. The development of the institution will be propelled by research, which plays an integral role in informing decisions. Food and nutrient needs should be guided by evidence, not just what people think they should be, the Vice-Chancellor explained. The institute



*A section of the audience*

Vice-Chancellor Professor Ivelaw Griffith. Such an institution, he explained, will address accessibility and availability of food – two important elements in food security. In order to meet the dietary needs of the population, we need to focus on quality, not just quantity. Food and nutrition issues

will also focus on teaching, advocacy and outreach programmes.

Guyana is on a path of economic transformation because of oil and gas, said the Vice-Chancellor, however we need not make the mistake of other countries who

neglect their agricultural sector by putting all their eggs in the oil basket. We have to diversify the sector, keeping in mind the green state development trajectory. We have the potential to go beyond Guyana and into the Caribbean – this is just the beginning, we have a long road ahead.

Reuben Robertson, representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), expressed the organisation's continued support as a strategic partner of the university. He noted a direct connection between climate change and food and nutrition security, and said that in striving for zero hunger, the FAO is confident that IFANS will provide the necessary academic training and research. Statistics, he explained, are good discussion points for decision making.



*Vice-Chancellor of UG, Professor Ivelaw Griffith, hands over a scroll of appreciation to Reuben Robertson, representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), with Chair of the event, former UG registrar Mr Vincent Alexander*

Honourable Minister of Agriculture Noel Holder said we have a great responsibility to meet food safety and nutrition requirements. What's needed is an effective food safety system, a food safety bill, and the cooperation of multiple organisations. We currently have a fragmented system whereby the Ministry of Public Health's Environmental Health Department provides training for food handlers, while the Bureau of Standards seeks to improve food safety nationally. The development of a single, effective regulatory and inspection system is needed.

Minister Holder also noted that we need to examine the effects climate change will have on the sector, for example in terms of excessive flooding, saying we need to create an agricultural base inland



*Students at the launch and exhibition of the Institute for Food and Nutrition Security*

to sustain agricultural development. For successful careers in the food industry, an expansion of entrepreneurship is also required, plus improvements in ICT, a scientific approach and networking. He expressed the Ministry of Agriculture's support to the cause of UG, noting that a multi-sectoral approach is needed for the sustainable development of food and nutrition security in Guyana.

Honourable Minister of Education Nicolette Henry described the launch of IFANS as a landmark event. The development of such an institution will contribute to Guyana's agricultural vision and the long life and healthy eating habits of its citizens. There should be an integrated approach to health, agriculture, education and society, she said. The newly appointed director of IFANS, Dr Dindyal Permaul, meanwhile explained that the establishment of the institute was necessary for the following reasons: 1) food availability (production); 2) food access (economic); 3) food consumption (adequacy of nutrition); and 4) stability. The world's population is projected to grow to 9.2 billion by 2050, threatening food security.



*Vice-Chancellor of UG, Professor Ivelaw Griffith, hands over a scroll of appreciation to Professor Leonard O'Garro, Founding Director of the Centre for Food Security and Entrepreneurship, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill*

According to Mr Owen Bovell, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, IFANS cannot operate in isolation, but must depend on private and public support and partnership. We need to start a conversation with persons and organisations with similar mandates, he said, not compete – it must be a reciprocal arrangement. He noted that a Bachelor of Food Science, a collaborative programme of the institute and other entities, will soon commence at The University of Guyana. And as part of CARICOM, the institute also embraces regional food policies to serve both national and regional needs. In order for us to be food secure, Mr Bovell said, we need to be sustainable. Being food secure is just one aspect of development in Guyana – the long-term goal is sustainability.



*Vice-Chancellor of UG, Professor Ivelaw Griffith, hands over a scroll of appreciation to Professor Verian Thomas, Associate Dean for Recruitment, Student Support and Alumni Affairs, College of Agriculture and Food Sciences, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University*

The event was organised by The University of Guyana's Office of Planning and International Engagement, which is responsible for leading and supporting planning, monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance; as well as promoting, facilitating and managing partnerships with international development agencies and academic institutions in other countries.

# UG lecturers on a mission to improve ICT in Guyana



*Honourable Minister of Public Telecommunications, Catherine Hughes*

On January 14, 2019, four lecturers of The University of Guyana's Department of Computer Science presented their findings at the Ministry of Public Telecommunications on the impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) training programmes – following a presentation in Jamaica in 2018. Mr Lenandlar Singh and Ms Juanelle Marks, lecturers from the Faculty of Natural Sciences (Department of Computer Science), presented 'Computer Science Education in a Developing Country: Experiences from Code Camp Guyana', while Ms Penelope DeFreitas and Ms Alicia Layne presented 'First Time Experiences of Female

Programming at Grade 6 to 9'. The two projects are collaborative initiatives between the National Centre for Education Research Development (NCERD), The University of Guyana and the Ministry of Public Telecommunications.

According to Honourable Minister of Public Telecommunications, Catherine Hughes, the ministry is heavily invested



*A section of the audience*

in ICT education and training to ensure that every citizen becomes computer lit-

erate. She said it has invested in several training interventions, and that children have taken to ICT like ducks to water – they can't get enough of it. She added that it is also trying to remove the fear of technology among girls, noting that last year less girls than boys participated in the six-week classes which were held during the August holiday at the Linden and Essequibo Institutes and Turkeyen and Tain Campuses.

Mr Singh, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Computer Science at UG, expressed the need to expose children to ICT at an earlier age at school. Code Camps, he said, are good for a collaborative learning experience among children. He also noted that a hands-on approach of doing and creating is an important element for fostering ICT among persons. In 2018, Code Camp Guyana had a total

of 120 students, aged nine to 16, only 40 of which were girls, he noted. He said the students had fun with the programme, but in order to foster development in ICT it can't just stop at fun. It has to be life changing.

Ms Marks, who worked with Mr Singh on the project, said that each student expressed interest in continuing programming. In addition, she observed that physical computing is more effective among younger children. The micro bit programmable computer they used to conduct the training was deemed effective, she said, however there is room for improvement.

Ms Layne and Ms DeFreitas highlighted the importance of promoting ICT skills to channel the creativity and problem-solving abilities of young peo-



*Mr Lenandlar Singh and Ms Juanelle Marks, lecturers from the Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Natural Sciences, UG*

ple. They noted a number of initiatives currently ongoing in computing education, such as STEM clubs teaching programming, Code Guyana, Guyana Girls Code and the Artificial Intelligence Competency Engineering Apprenticeship Programme.

Next steps for The University of Guyana are exploring the option of offering an intermediary course in Computer Science and doing some readjustment of the curricula. All four lecturers advised that anyone interested in ICT should not be dissuaded by others who say that it

is a difficult field, but instead believe in themselves and prepare their mind for the development of both technical and soft skills, such as resilience, patience and critical thinking.

Participants of the study were exposed to ICT methods such as coding/programming – this is the process of creating a set of instructions that tell a computer how to perform a task; apps, which refers to computer applications or a computer programme; HTML, hypertext markup language – or the language used to create web pages; BBC Micro:bit, a tiny programmable computer designed by the BBC for use in computer education to make learning and teaching hands on and fun; processing, a programming language designed for the visual arts community; as well as Scratch, a free educational programming language and online community targeting primarily children.



*Ms Penelope DeFreitas and Ms Alicia Layne, lecturers from the Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Natural Sciences, UG*

## Sounds of Advocacy, Language and Liberation

Two lecturers within the Faculty of Education and Humanities, Ms Charlene Wilkinson and Dr Tamirand Nnena De Lisser, visited Jamaica for the ‘Sounds of Advocacy, Language and Liberation’ Conference. The event recognised the living legacy of Professor Hubert Devonish, Professor of Linguistics at The University

by the Professor’s work. It was attended by participants from the USA, Canada, South America and the wider Caribbean, as well as students and other professionals with an interest in linguistics.

The presentation by Ms Wilkinson and Dr De Lisser was entitled ‘Colloquium 2016 and the Emergence of the Guyanese Languages Unit at The University of Guyana’. It focused on the activism carried out and challenges faced in the establishment of the newly approved Guyanese Languages Unit (GLU) at The University of Guyana. The lecturers outlined the role of the Languages of Guyana Colloquium in setting up the GLU, detailed the works that the unit has been involved in, and provided insights into its plan of action for mobilising research, documentation, revitalisation, and language planning and policy for the Guyanese languages. Other presentations that focused on Guyanese languages were: Daidrah Smith-Telfer’s ‘Wa no ded no dash we: Language Revitalisation Efforts in Wakapoa – The Case of Lokono (Arawak)’ and Ian Robertson’s ‘Losing Linguistic Competence: Two Berbice Dutch Case Samples’.



*Professor Hubert Devonish, Professor of Linguistics, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus and Dr Tamirand De Lisser, Lecturer, Faculty of Education and Humanities, UG*

of the West Indies, Mona, and the work of his students – opening up the way for greater collaboration in the areas of research, teaching and advocacy as inspired

Globally, there has been growing awareness of the value of linguistic re-



*Ms Charlene Wilkinson, lecturer, Faculty of Education and Humanities, UG*

search for sustainable development. Given that Guyana is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in South America, note the lecturers, we are at an advantage. Dr De Lisser’s only concern is the level of support that will be needed and the time it will take for the transformation to happen. To those interested in joining this field of research and academia, she said: “Go for it! There is much work to be done ... and while doing it, aspire to make a difference.”

## PERSONALITY PROFILE:

# Ms Rhonda Hamilton-Weekes

Rhonda Hamilton-Weekes is currently a lecturer in the Centre for Communication Studies at The University of Guyana. She recently expanded her academic portfolio having graduated with a Masters in Instructional Design and Technology from The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados.

She spent her teenage years at Providence Primary School after which she transitioned to Covent Garden Secondary School. One day, University of Guyana personnel visited her school on outreach. She distinctly remembers her interaction with former Registrar Mr Vincent Alexander, who gave her an application form to apply to The University of Guyana. "I had never thought about attending university up to that point in my life," she admitted. However she kept the application form and years later used that very same form to apply to UG.

Her initial intention was to pursue Spanish at The University of Guyana, but instead she did a diploma in Communication Studies and graduated in 2005. Wanting to be independent and earn, she took a break from studies and decided to work: "I taught at the Institute of Professional Education for approximately one year and thereafter at Berea Royal College."

After some time, she returned to UG and pursued a degree in Communication Studies, graduating in 2009 with a distinction. "Having completed the degree I wanted to work in Public Relations, that was my area of interest in communication," said Ms Hamilton-Weekes. "However that did not materialise and I got a job at GraceKennedy instead." Shortly after joining GraceKennedy she was offered the opportunity to lecture at UG, and so began teaching the introductory courses as a part-time lecturer. In 2010 she became a fulltime member of staff and currently lectures in Media Management, Online Journalism, Integrated Marketing Communication, Specialised Journalism: Arts and Culture; and a Research Course.

In 2014 she pursued a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (English) at The University of Guyana. And her educational pursuits did not end there: she applied to two other masters programmes but could not pursue them due to lack of funding. However, in December 2015 she started a Masters in Instructional and Design – a partnership between The University of Guyana and The University of the West Indies. Ms Hamilton-Weekes explained how the versatility of the programme and its focus on online learning is applicable to, and can be useful to, all faculties of the university.

Alongside her studies and lecturing, Ms Hamilton-Weekes has continued to expand her portfolio. In 2012 she lent administrative support to the Centre for Communication Studies when she served as acting director. She also provided general support to the Faculty of Social Sciences, where she served on the Health Sciences Board for one year, and also served on the newly formed Learning Resource and Facilities Committee. In addition, she did training in Communication: New Media for the Guyana Police Force.

### Turning failure into triumph

Ms Hamilton-Weekes believes that whatever you do should be done to the best of your ability. She is inspired to dispel the stereotype that women cannot do certain things in academia or elsewhere. "I go beyond the perception that I cannot do it and I invest 100 percent to become the person I want to be," she said with a smile. In the past, she viewed failure as a disappointment. But today, she turns failure and disappointment into strength.

Her vision for the Centre for Communication Studies is to offer online courses, blended format courses (a combination of face-to-face and online) and specialised courses at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She feels this will make the programme more accessible and encourage more applicants to the programme.

To foster development, she explained, The University of Guyana needs to redesign and repackage its brand to meet market needs, develop a working online programme, and revise the defects in access to online courses. She hopes that more personnel can be trained in Instructional Design and Technology, so that by 2020 an effective, efficient and committed team can be put together to develop online programmes. She also advocates a mentorship programme to guide new lecturers of the university on its policies, operations, procedures etc.

Outside of UG, Ms Hamilton-Weekes is a member of the Herstelling Church of the Nazarene and sits on the church advisory board for the Demerara-Essequibo district. She would like to be remembered as someone who gave her all and tried to inspire others to give their best as well.

On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, the Renaissance team and staff of The University of Guyana, congratulations are extended to Ms Rhonda Hamilton-Weekes on this special achievement.



# 4th Annual Human Rights Film Festival observance held in Georgetown on December 10, 2018



# PERSONALITY PROFILE: Dr Dennis Gill

Born in Den Amstel, West Coast Demerara, to two Berbician parents, Dr Dennis Gill has – with much pride – completed his PhD: Literatures in English in 2018, Thesis: Reparation, Psychoanalysis and Masculinity: The Writing of Earl Lovelace.

His educational journey began at the Tutorial High School in Georgetown through an athletic scholarship. He then moved onto Lilian Dewar College of Education for Secondary Teachers (1976-79); then The University of Guyana (1985-1990), graduating with a BA in English (with Distinction); before returning to the University of Guyana (1990-1991) to do the first year of a Postgraduate Diploma in Education. He then travelled to The University of Warwick (1997-1998) for an MA in Colonial/Post-Colonial Literatures in English; and finally to the University of the West Indies – Mona (2012-2018).

Not only is Dr Gill an academic, he is also an educator. He lectured at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (1991-2001), the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (2001-2016) and since 2016 has lectured at the University of Guyana, Berbice Campus, teaching Literatures in English and courses in Education. He shared some of his thoughts and inspirations with Renaissance:

## What inspires you in life?

My goal is to inspire positive change and growth in myself and others. My preoccupation for the last 25 years has been generating discourse on masculinity crises and healing. I see myself as addressing the root causes for the formation of dysfunctional masculinity, as well as helping to devise ways through which male subjects may be rehabilitated in society.

## What are your fears and how do you overcome them?

My major fear is becoming obsolete or redundant in a world that is constantly in a state of flux. I address this fear by remaining relevant through research and activism.

## Tell us about your recently completed PhD

This study argues that [Earl] Lovelace's work is a suitable platform for examining masculinity formation within the context of the ongoing struggle for reparation in Caribbean societies. Using Earl Lovelace's fiction and essays, in which he outlines a humanistic interpretation of reparation, the study focuses on the processes which lead to psychical repair, and explores its usefulness for understanding masculinity formation in the Caribbean.

Whereas a number of prior studies use the West Indian novel to demonstrate how the crises within masculinities result from patriarchal standards of ownership and control, this study also uses Caribbean fiction to prompt meaningful discussions on the healing of maimed masculinities. Due to the psychoanalytic implications in Lovelace's conceptualisation of reparation, this thesis, understandably, privileges a psychoanalytic approach. Since Frantz Fanon explores Caribbean masculinity in the context of European colonialism, insights from the Martinican psychiatrist provide an appropriate lens for interrogating

Lovelace's representation of masculinities. Insights from female Caribbean thinkers such as Merle Hodge, Erna Brodber and M. Jacqui Alexander on the modus of the dehumanised Caribbean male psyche, and avenues for healing, also inform this study.

In addition, Freud's 'Oedipus complex', Jung's theory of 'individuation', Althusser's theory on ideology, Gramsci's conception of hegemony, Foucault's understanding of power, Lacan's concepts of the 'mirror' and the 'gaze' are all germane to the deliberations in this thesis. So, too, the sociological theories of Beckles, Satchell and Nehusi on reparation, and Connell, Lewis, Brittan and Miller on masculinity formation. The study concludes by considering how the writings of Lovelace exemplify the role of the African unconscious as an agency of struggle for the restitution of humanness in Caribbean male subjects. The indigenous practices under consideration include folklore, the 'Jouvay' mud-daubing ritual, the Shouter Baptist worship rituals, the Shango baptismal ceremony, ritualistic dance forms, and carnival, which emerge as viable alternatives to psychoanalytic approaches within the Caribbean landscape.

## What were some of the challenges and how did you overcome them?

Study on Caribbean masculinity engaging imaginative literature is a relatively new area. More so, as against other studies that engaged critical theory to dictate the meaning of the text, I used imaginative literature as an instrument to critique psychoanalytic and sociological theories on manliness. Moreover, my exploring a unique reading of reparation by Lovelace posed significant challenges in terms of formalising a theoretical framework. In addition, prior studies on masculinity focused on crises and did not focus on approaches to healing. By placing male subjects under psychoanalytic scrutiny, I addressed the reliability of theories often deemed empirical – establishing the need for a discourse based on [the] cultural and spiritual to address issues on Caribbean masculinity.

## What's your vision for your department/faculty?

I anticipate masculinity evolving into a serious area of study. I hope to see courses and even programmes in masculinity at The University of Guyana.

## What's your vision for The University of Guyana?

I see The University of Guyana (after engaging in a rigorous self-study and radical change) emerging as one of the best regional universities.

## Do you have any mentors?

My mentors are the late Kwame Apata, Joyce Jonas (former lecturer at UG), Rupert Roopnarine, Michael Bucknor, the late Stuart Hall (Cultural Anthropologist), who I met while studying in the UK, and the late Bob Marley.

## What do you want your legacy to be?

*I want my legacy to be what Antonio Gramsci refers to as the 'Organic intellectual' – an intellectual who is of the people, and functioning for the people.*



# Personality Profile: Chief Accountant

## Ms Yasoda Matabadal

Ms Yasoda Matabadal is the newly appointed Chief Accountant of The University of Guyana, the oversight person for the day-to-day runnings of the Bursary. Prior to joining the Bursary, she had been looking for a change from the dynamics of a small company and thought she could use her expertise to contribute to development in the financial systems at UG. Today her influence includes, but is not limited to, the departments of salaries, fees and special funds. It's a challenging role, but luckily Ms Matabadal loves catching errors in the financial statements and balances brought before her.

Her primary goal, she said, is working with her colleagues to update the office's systems – thus reducing the backlog of work. By putting in additional controls and reviewing the system on a frequent basis, more energy and time could be spent on present-day work. She also wants to see the computerisation of Bursary documents, to enable easy access, and the required training meted out to the staff so that they can function more proficiently within their capacities.

Among her qualifications, Ms Matabadal has a Master's in Business Administration (Finance) from the Australian Institute of Business (AIB) in 2015, a Graduate Certificate in Management from the Australian Institute of Business (AIB) in 2014 and an Advanced Diploma of Business from Cambridge University, London.



Ms Matabadal believes in holding her ground in the face of opposition and prejudice. Her upbringing in the village of La Grange on the West Bank of Demerara, she said, instilled in her the importance of showing respect to others. She still has memories of a happy childhood, treading barefoot through the grass and picking fruits. She listed God as her greatest influence and mentor, but also her father and brother-in-law, who are both accountants.

Her quest in life is to “do what is right” and she described herself as “a stickler for rules and regulations”. Though her first love was journalism, she decided to become an accountant for more financial stability. She has, however, still maintained her passion for writing short stories. In her spare time she also loves reading, spending time with family and going to church.

When asked what advice she would give to those interested in pursuing studies in accounting, she said: “Always remember your debits and your credits. All transactions always have to have your debits and your credits. You need to hold on to what you would have learned from your Frank Wood days.” Frank Wood being the author of the financial regulations textbook used to prepare students for CSEC.

She hopes that in years to come her influence on the financial systems at The University of Guyana will allow for a much easier flow of work being completed and less backlog.

# Recognition for sports excellence

The Annual Sports Awards Ceremony was held on December 14, 2018, at the Education Lecture Theatre of The University of Guyana. Awards were given to faculties who placed first, second and third in athletics, basketball, chess, dominoes, futsal, rugby and scrabble competitions. Participating students were also awarded for outstanding performances in national, regional and international competitions. Most awards went to students of the university, but some staff members were recognised too.



**Interfaculty Athletics Championship:** Winner Faculty of Education and Humanities; Runner-up Faculty of Health Sciences; Largest Contingent Faculty of Education and Humanities; Most uniformed Faculty of Health Sciences; Best Banner Faculty of Health Sciences; Champion Male Athlete Salim Yussuf (Faculty of Engineering and Technology); Champion Female Athlete Ruth Sanmoogan (Faculty of Health Sciences)

**Interfaculty Basketball:** Winning team Faculty of Social Sciences (Cosmo Evans, Rudolph Daly, Sheldon Howell, Shaquille Adonis, Jafar Gibbons, Samuel Thompson, Kadeem Peterkin, Drumson McCaulay, Marvin Durant); Runner-up team Faculty of Technology (Shamar Anderson, Elio Cameron, Tramaine Beckles, Darroll Williams, Kwesi Thompson, DeQuan Wray, Alester Lewis, Yoel Meusa, Dionne Stoll)

**Chess competition (November 1-30, 2017)** Chess King Davion Mars

Scrabble Queen Christina Basil; Scrabble King Meikel Mohabir

**Inter-Faculty Dominoes (October 26-November 3, 2017)** Runner-up team Faculty of Social Sciences (Desmond Kissoon, Orin Wilson, Shanese Richards, Ron Glasgow, Jamaal Duff, Sarah Bovell);

Third place team: Faculty of Education and Humanities (Mark Wills, Nyol August, Winston Maynard, Neoka John, Roy Haney, Bryan Laurence, Verona Persaud, Osafa Dos Santos)

**Inter-Faculty Small Goal Championship:** Winning team Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry (Sven Anthony, Eron Alonzo, Dwayne Ganga, Mark Austin, Randy Belgrave, Mark Chester, Tyrek Abel, Jamall Woolford, Alex Chan); Runner-up team Faculty of Natural Sciences (Shemar Trotman, Triston Carter, Jewel O'Brien, Ajay Singh, Imran Khan, Tony Clay)

**Inter-Faculty Tag Rugby (October 27, 2017)** Winning Team: Faculty of Health Sciences (Kevon David, Malcolm Wills, Marvin Scott, Joshua Sargent, Jaryl Moore, Delroy Austin, Kevin Henry, Asim Victor, Kempton David); Runner-up team Mixed faculty team: Osafa Dos Santos (Faculty of Education and Humanities), Imran Khan (Faculty of Natural Sciences), Doadnauth Sawh (Faculty of Natural Sciences), Myron Fordyce (Faculty of Engineering and Technology), Randy Ooet (Faculty of Natural Sciences), Renick Alleyne (School of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation)

**Outstanding Performances (2017/2018):** Futsal (Most Goals Scored) Trevor Lewis (5) – staff. Dominoes (Most Sixes Scored in Competition) Lavern Fraser (8) – staff. Most Improved Student Athlete: Athletics Delina Clarke; Cricket Linden Austin; Chess Tristan Carter; Basketball Jensen Bancroft; Rugby Aziza Edwards. National Association Competition, Cricket: Most Wickets Taken Dennis Heywood (16); Most Runs Scored Omesh Danram (285); Best Fielder Keron Sewnarine. Basketball: Most Dedicated Player Damani Thomas. Rugby Tariq



Rodney. National Colleges Athletics Championships (Inaugural): Champion Female Athlete Ruth Sanmoogan; Champion Male Athlete Osafa DosSantos

**National Colleges Athletics Championships (Inaugural):** Participants: Ruth Sanmoogan, Osafa DosSantos, Merissa Tucker, Kadeem Peters, Delina Clarke, Shimar Velloza, Stacy Wilson, Dante Thom, Tamar Charles, Salim Yussuf, Stayon Woodroffe, Carlwyn Collins, Natasha Ramroop, Tramaine Beckles, Atavia Johnson, Emanuel Archibald, Kim Chan, Owen Adonis, Keziah Austin, Arinze Chance, Kenisha Prescott, Marcella Munroe. International Competition: Basketball (Curaçao) Cosmo Evans, Kadeem Peterkin, Cubator Stephen, Jonathan Browne, Jeremy Thomas, Shaquille Adonis, Selvaughn Moseley, Dwight McKinnon, Darroll Williams, Shaquille Eversley, Quincy Easton, Rondel Holder, Akeem Kanhai; Chess Kevin Craigwell, Rondell Palmer, Melroy Maison, Davion Mars, Sidney Nelson; Cricket (Suriname) Dennis Heywood, Ray Newton, Mahendra



Persaud, Godfrey Matthews, Nicholas Bollers, Pavindralall Persaud, Devon George, Bahadra Singh, Arryan Ram-sundar, Surin Chandrapaul, Jarrel Gentle, Ershad Alli, Rawle Marrel, Faruq Ally; Coaches: Athletics Mark Scott; Basketball Warren Wilson; Chess Ronuel Greenidge; Cricket Kenroy Joseph

Ms Lavern Fraser, UG Sports Organiser, stated that in the coming years: "I would like to see a sports department comprising of not just a sports organiser but coaches, physical instructors and other relevant personnel to enhance and embrace the needs of students."

On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and the Renaissance team, congratulations are extended to all the recipients of awards.



# Spreading Christmas cheer

The inclement weather did not put a damper on the festivities of the annual 'Christmas at the Bandstand' concert held on November 25, 2018, at the seawall bandstand. The highly anticipated event, organised annually by the Public Relations Division of The University of Guyana, aims to spread festive cheer at Christmas. According to Public Relations Officer Ms Paulette Paul, "We don't postpone Christmas – despite the rain."

The crowd was privy to a full night of entertainment from past, current and potential students of the university. As UG Registrar Dr Nigel Gravesande explained, this event marks the commencement of the holiday period. Through this intimate setting, he said, we wish to spread joy and share Christmas festivities with you, the community.

The festivities began with an emotional rendition of 'Noel (Light of the World)' by UG student Rebekah Mohanram, then a harmonious duet of 'The Christmas Song' and 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' by Ronelsa Christian and Olivia Morris. Other performances included Gabriella Chapman with 'Mary, Did You Know?'; Cassie Lowe with 'Where Are You, Christmas?'; past student Rondel Holder with 'O Come, All Ye Faithful' and 'Guyanese Christmas'; as well as artist-in residence Ras Kamo Williams on steel pan.

Johnathan Robinson, a student of Music Unlimited, also did a piano recital of 'Silent Night'; seven-year-old drummer John Butters delighted the crowd with his skills; and Ronaldo Lowe played a marvellous piece on the guitar with the group 4Hours.

First-time attendee Veronica Smith said she heard about the concert through an advertisement on the radio – and it did not disappoint. She enjoyed it thoroughly and promised to come again next year. Christmas, she added, is a time for celebration with family and friends, but also a time for sharing – especially with the poor and less fortunate. She declared the event a good initiative by The University of Guyana, and praised the excellent presentations and talented performers.

There was also face painting for the children and storytelling by Ole' Man Pappie, aka UG lecturer Michael Khan, who implored those gathered to give God thanks for their blessings. In order to experience the true beauty of Christmas, he said, it's not about the cost of the gift, but the love that goes with the gift. Do something good for someone you don't know, he encouraged, and bless a child in need at Christmas.



**The 2018 Long Service Award Ceremony for staff members was held on December 18, 2018, under the theme Jubilation. Awards were presented for 20, 25, 30 and 35 years service. A special award was presented to the longest-serving employee of The University of Guyana, Professor Emeritus Joycelynne Loncke for 50 years of service.**



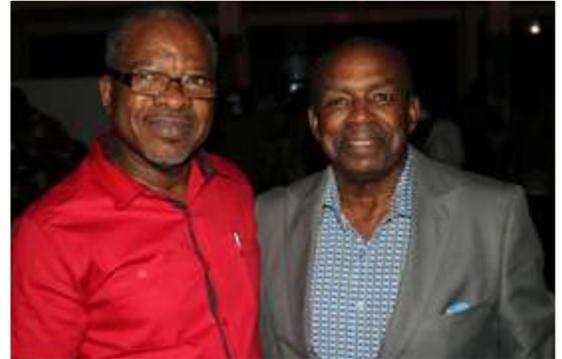
# *UG library Christmas tree-lighting ceremony*



# *The Public Relations Division Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was held on November 29, 2018*



# *University of Guyana staff Christmas party held on December 20, 2018*





# *PR spreads Christmas cheer to children of the community*

The Public Relations Division, hosted its annual Santa's Helpers Party on December 19, 2018 in the Education Lecture Theatre, Turkeyen Campus. The aim of the event is to bring Christmas cheer to school children in the surrounding community. The Christmas party provides an opportunity for staffers, students and other members of the campus community to share good will and bring smiles to the faces of underprivileged children during the festive season.

Fifty-four children were selected from the C' Field and Sophia nursery schools to attend the party. Gifts were donated by staff members and students who selected the name of each child from the Christmas tree at the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carol's event, where the launch of Santa's Helpers was held on November 29, 2018. The gifts were presented to the children at the Santa's Helpers Party, along with a small food hamper. The children participated in games and other fun filled activities with Santa Claus and his helper. Parents also joined in the fun festivities with a game of musical chairs and The Price is Right. A fun time was had by all in attendance at the 2018 Santa's Helpers party.

The Public Relations Division extends a special thank you to staffers in the Vice-Chancellery, Registry, Library, Faculties of Agriculture & Forestry, Earth & Environmental Sciences, Education & Humanities, Engineering & Technology, Health Sciences, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and the School of Entrepreneurship & Business Innovation. As well as, the Rotaract Club and Hindu Society; students of the Agriculture Club, UG Biology Club, Cyber Security Club, UG Geographical Society, The Bible Chapter – IS-IVCF and Muriel's Snackette and well-wishers who contributed cash or kind to ensure that the little ones had pleasant memories to cherish.

This annual event has been hosted by the Division since 1993.





# Happy Holidays



UNIVERSITY of GUYANA

*From:*  
*Prof. Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith, C.C.H. & Family*

*We wish students, alumni, staff and friends a very Happy Christmas season and a peaceful and prosperous Holiday. Looking forward to continued success in 2019 as we continue our journey along Renaissance Road.*



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN BERBICE

Berbice Campus held an outreach where they shared their "bread" with the less fortunate in communities during the Christmas season. This activity was organised by the Berbice Campus Library (BCL), and staff members and students gave generously to the venture.

The library hopes to continue this annual event in anticipation that it becomes bigger and better in the years to come. The following schools and orphanage have benefitted from the venture:

- 1st Caanan's Children's Home: an orphanage, Port Mourant, Corentyne (2007)
- 2nd Corriverton Primary School, Skeldon (2008)
- 3rd Belvedere Primary School, Corentyne Berbice (2009)
- 4th Rose Hall Town Nursery School, Corentyne Berbice (2010)
- 5th Special Needs School, New Amsterdam (2011)
- 6th Mc Gowan Primary School, Manchester Village, Corentyne (2012)
- 7th Rose Hall Primary School, Canje (2013)
- 8th Fyrish Primary School, Fyrish Village (2014)
- 9th Schepmoed Primary School, Mara Village Berbice River (2015)
- 10th Dharm-Shala, New Amsterdam, Berbice (2016)
- 11th Ithaca Primary School, West Coast Berbice (2017)

### 12th Annual Christmas Cheer, 2018 - a two fold event:

- ◆ **First @ Manchester Nursery School** -gifts and snacks were given to the children. They also had a photographic moment with Santa Claus, Mrs Claus and the Elf.
- ◆ **Second @ New Amsterdam Dharm Shala** -each of the elders was given fruits, snacks and a hamper. Monetary rewards were also given for answering simple questions relating to Christmas.



**Christmas Cheer @ the Manchester Nursery School  
And the New Amsterdam Dharm Shala, Nov 30, 2018**



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# Renaissance

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For our next edition we invite you to submit news items, short articles, poems and high resolution pictures of activities related to the national agenda and consistent with the development trajectory of UG. Share with us how UG has contributed to building industry and livelihoods for citizens both at home and abroad. Do share Renaissance with at least ten of your friends and send us their email contacts to facilitate direct mailing of future editions. We thank you for being part of this transformative initiative.

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