



UNIVERSITY of GUYANA

University of Guyana, Office of the Vice Chancellor

Vol. 3, No. 1, January & February, 2018

RENAISSANCE

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Career Day Opens New Doors *pg 7*



"The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet" -- Aristotle

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THE VC SPEAKS

Not just Platitudes, Practices

“To know what people really think, pay regard to what they do, rather than what they say.”

– George Santayana

I took the opportunity in my July 2017 Investiture Address to explain that “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.” The words of wisdom above penned by Spanish philosopher George Santayana have resonance with Project Renaissance; our pursuits are not just about platitudes, but about practices. Some—only some—of these are reflected in this edition of our newsletter.

What are some of this Doing—these practices—one might ask? They include the completion of an extension of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry at Turkeyen, which cost G\$23 million of UG resources and benefits the students and staff there in several ways: new officers, a new sanitary block, a new lounge for students, and fire escape facilities that never existed, among other things. Moreover, use was made of the privately-raised Vice Chancellor’s Fund for Strategic Initiatives to provide new furniture for their staff lounge.

The Doing also included the electrical rewiring of the buildings that are part of the Faculty of Health Sciences complex, the strengthening of the partnership with GTT with a donation of G\$3 million to us as part of their Innovate 8 Project, and continuation of the instructional and performance engagements by Distinguished Visiting Artist-in-Residence Dave Martins. Also notable was the holding of the inaugural meeting of the Editorial Board of the recently-established University of Guyana Press. The Board is led by Professor George (Ken) Danns, an Education Resource Ambassador, who is an alum and a former faculty member of our university.

We also held the inaugural meeting of the Feasibility Study Team for the creation of an Institute for Food and Nutrition Security. The team is co-led by Professors Verian Thomas of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and Leonard O’Garro of the University of the West Indies.



Moreover, after a nine-month interregnum, we had the appointment of the new University Council, our governing body. Among its main decisions was the election of Major General (Retired) Joseph Singh as Pro-Chancellor. The Pro-Chancellor is the equivalent of the Vice Chair of the Board in a corporate setting, the Chair being the Chancellor, Professor Eon Nigel Harris.

Thus, we continue to Dream and to Do in our journey along Renaissance Road.

Keep on keeping on!

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

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

Welcome to Volume 3, No. 1 of Renaissance, the newsletter from The Office of the Vice-Chancellor in which we share all the latest activities and developments taking place at The University of Guyana.

It is said that change is the only constant in life, and this is certainly the case at the University. Many significant transformations are occurring at this great institution – just some of which are highlighted in this January/February edition.

One major step is the appointment of a new Council to oversee the effective management of University affairs. Another is the election of a new Pro-Chancellor. There is also growth in the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, and plans for a new library with modern amenities that will facilitate greater learning and research.

Other notable mentions include the Conversations on Law and Society series, a rare autobiography, the recent epilepsy-awareness forum, plus our annual Open/Career Day, track and field sporting events, and much more.

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

UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA

VICE CHANCELLOR'S FUND FOR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

GIVING TO UG

Supporting UG can be achieved through monetary contributions in the form of gifts and/or sponsorship (s).

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The University of Guyana
Turkeyen Campus

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Accountability and Reporting

- A receipt shall be issued when a cheque or cash is received
- A certificate of contribution shall be issued for donors using the electronic transfer system
- A register of donors shall be maintained
- A weekly report on cumulative donations received
- Donors shall be informed and updated on use of funds
- Donations deposited into accounts
- Donations disclosed in management reports and financial statements

NEW EXTENSION BOOSTS AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

Students and staff of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry are set to enjoy more space for teaching and research following a \$30 million extension of one of the Faculty's buildings.

The opening of the new facility, located on the Turkeyen Campus, was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on March 7, 2018. "It's not every day you get an extension on a building," noted Dean of the Faculty Owen Bovell. He expressed thanks and appreciation to the Vice-Chancellor and the management team of The University of Guyana for the welcome development.

In his remarks, Vice-Chancellor Professor Ivelaw Griffith thanked students and staff for their patience and support in ensuring the completion of the extension, and assured those present that the structure was built with health and safety in mind – comprising as it does a fire escape and sanitary block.

The importance of the extension was also highlighted by Delma Nedd, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, who spoke of the need for more investment in quality training, research and education to develop the agricultural sector. "Agriculture is needed for the sustainable development of our economy," she explained – adding that the sector constitutes 20 percent of the Gross Domestic Product of Guyana. She encouraged more collaboration between The University of Guyana and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Also present at the ceremony were Registrar Dr Nigel Gravesande, Deputy Registrar Dr Theodosius Velloza, Assistant Dean of the Faculty Lambert Chester and Public Relations Officer Paulette Paul, plus lecturers, students and other invited guests.



From left (foreground), Dean , Owen Bovell, Permanent Secretary Delma Nedd, Ministry of Agriculture and Vice-Chancellor of UG, Professor Ivelaw Griffith



A section of the audience



A section of the audience

The extension to the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry marks just one of various ongoing initiatives to make improvements on campus. "We are working to improve all faculties and services," said Vice-Chancellor Griffith. He encouraged staff to employ technological advancements to facilitate the learning process of students, and urged all to take care of the University's facilities and not deface or steal what is in the process of being built.

CAREER DAY OPENS NEW DOORS



Teacher, Vice -Chancellor, and Upper Six Queen’s College student Sasha Cox, who was presented with a grant



A section of the audience

The University of Guyana launched its annual Open/Career Day on February 16, 2018, under the theme ‘Expanding your Horizons, Exploring the Possibilities’. Organised by the Public Relations Division, Open/Career Day is an opportunity for the University to showcase its faculties to prospective students.

In his opening remarks to students, teachers and other visitors gathered on the Turkeyen Campus, Dr Nigel Gravesande, University of Guyana Registrar, highlighted that the University offers a wide range of disciplines, in an effort to respond to the developmental needs of Guyana, the region and the world. More importantly, he added, it produces quality graduates: “Graduates of The University of Guyana contribute and are recognised around the world.”

The concept of a University ‘family’ was further developed in Vice-Chancellor Professor Ivelaw Griffith’s keynote address, in which he asked audience members to hold hands “as a symbol of solidarity” and repeat motivational phrases. He also held an informal question and answer segment, in which he encouraged students to seek a tertiary education, saying: “Education is the facilitator of change, it can change the circumstances of your family, your community and your nation.”

During the question and answer segment, Queen’s College student Sasha Cox was awarded a \$50,000 grant as a partial scholarship to attend the University, after answering a

three-part question correctly. Ms Cox expressed gratitude for the grant and said she plans to utilise it on completion of her secondary education to pursue a law degree at The University of Guyana.

Finally, the Vice-Chancellor highlighted three key ways for students to capitalise on their university education and become successful: 1. Don’t be comfortable with mediocrity: always strive for high standards and quality. 2. Honesty is the best policy: don’t be dishonest or plagiarise. 3. Practice the value of respect: respect for your time and the time of others.

For information on how to apply to The University of Guyana, contact the Registry’s Admission Division on 222-2740.



Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ivelaw Griffith encourages students

UG MOVES FORWARD



From left: Major General (Retired) Joe Singh, Vice Chancellor Ivelaw Griffith, Chancellor E. Nigel Harris and Registrar Nigel Gravesande

On March 8, 2018, The University of Guyana held a press briefing at the Education Lecture Theatre, Turkeyen Campus, to highlight a number of plans and proposals relating to the management of the University.

These notices included the announcement of a new 26-member Council, the roles and responsibilities of which were examined at an Annual Business Meeting held earlier that day. Also discussed at the meeting were statutes governing policy and regulations at the institution, such as the 1963 Act that established the University.

According to the Chancellor of the University, Professor E. Nigel Harris, Council members will oversee and be accountable for the strategic plan, policymaking, budget and financial management of the University. "It is time for The University of Guyana to be responsible to Parliament and the people of Guyana," he said.

Also announced was the appointment of Major General (Retired) Joe Singh to the post of Pro-Chancellor. "It is an honour to be elected part of the UG team," said Major General (Rtd.) Singh, "and I will continue to work in the best interests of the University, and pledge to do the utmost to further the interests of the University."

In an effort to facilitate the continuous development of the institution through his Renaissance initiative, Vice-Chancellor Professor Ivelaw Griffith identified four key pillars: Capital Investment, Academic Enhancement, Economic Viability and Alumni Engagement.



Council Members

Also on the University's academic agenda are the launch of new programmes in Psychology and Land Management, the pursuit of accreditation for the School of Dentistry, preparation for 'first oil and beyond' through building partnerships with industry stakeholders, the establishment of a Food and Nutrition Security Institute, and the launch of the board of UG Press, which will publish books, monographs and journals.

Professor Griffith further noted the following initiatives as part of the alumni and civic engagement pillar: Dave Martins as a distinguished Artist-in-Residence engaged on campus and in the community, the 'I Love UG' campaign, the alumni engagement strategy being implemented, as well as Conversations on Law and Society.

CDB GIVES UG \$31M TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT



pected to have optimal functionality, including a café, enclosed reading rooms and creative spaces.

“Human-resource capacity is also needed to accommodate such a new development,” said the Vice-Chancellor, citing the need for training. This view was endorsed by Dr Ram, who noted that the project would build human capital and create a library that is more environmentally resilient and socially inclusive.

The vision for a new library at The University of Guyana is set to become a reality thanks to the commitment of a \$31 million grant from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), as part of its initial pledge of US\$5 million.

The announcement was made on March 1, 2018, at a meeting between University of Guyana Vice-Chancellor Professor Ivelaw Griffith and Dr Justin Ram, Director of Economics at CDB.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Caribbean Development Bank for its practical demonstration of support, which will assist the University’s efforts to boost learning outcomes, transform Guyana and the region, and improve connections between Guyana and the rest of the world.

Phase 1 of the library project, consisting of the feasibility study and technical design, is expected to be conducted within a seven-month period. Phase 2 will follow this: namely the construction of the edifice and also building capacity. The new library is ex-



Top and bottom: Vice Chancellor, Professor Ivelaw Griffith, and CDB Director of Economics, Dr Justin Ram



University of Guyana staff and Caribbean Development Bank representatives

Living with EPILEPSY

Following an Epilepsy Awareness Walk on February 11, 2018, The University of Guyana marked International Epilepsy Awareness Day on February 12, 2018, with an epilepsy discourse organised by the Faculty of Health Sciences in partnership with the Epilepsy Foundation of Guyana.

The event took place at the Education Lecture Theatre, Turkeyen Campus, and featured presentations by Dr Thomas Singh, Christopher France, Gibran Azeez, La Quanza Williams and Donna Marques. An interactive session was also held which examined the importance of addressing epilepsy – a condition that is not commonly talked about and often misunderstood.

Panel members explained what epilepsy is and outlined the different types of epilepsy, warning signs and symptoms, and myths that exist about the condition.



Dr Thomas Singh, Senior lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences

They also shared first-aid techniques, along with other control mechanisms, to guide participants' responses in the event of a seizure.

The Epilepsy Foundation of Guyana, which became a chapter of the International Bureau of Epilepsy in September 2015, is built on the premise that a person with epilepsy can enjoy a better quality of life with proper care. It advocates for better health services and treatment options for epileptics, promotes patient advocacy programmes, and raises public awareness through campaigns, epilepsy support groups and the procuring of scarce anti-epileptic drugs for patients.



Audience members



Dr Thomas Singh, Senior lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences and member of the Epilepsy Foundation of Guyana

UG HOSTS FIRST *MOTHER* LANGUAGE DAY OBSERVANCE

In a bid to sustain and promote Guyana’s many languages, The University of Guyana hosted its inaugural International Mother Language Day observance on February 21, 2018, at the Education Lecture Theatre, Turkeyen Campus.

The first session consisted of a theatre-in-the-round in which students, staff and other guests were invited to enjoy a display of artefacts and drumming, as well as storytelling, poetry, song and proverbs recited in English, Guyanese Creole and different indigenous languages spoken in Guyana.

Participants of the first session included Alim Hosein and Gentian Miller of the Faculty of Education and Humanities, Michael Khan as storyteller Ole’ Man Pappie, members of the Guyanese Languages Unit (GLU), Michael



First Lady of Guyana Sandra Granger

motivational speech before distributing certificates to graduates. The course was organised by the Guyanese Languages Unit – part of the Department of Language and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Education and Humanities – and conducted by GLU founding members Charlene Wilkinson and Dr Tamirand De Lisser.

According to Dhanaiswary Jaganauth, another founding member of the GLU, as well as a lecturer in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Mother Language Day is intended to remind us about each and every one of the world’s languages.



Audience

McGarrell of the Amerindian People’s Association, the Fos Klaas Creole writing group, Joan and Skeitha Thomas of the Wakapao Language Revitalisation team, and drummer Owen Ifill.

Also in attendance were Dr Barbara Reynolds, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Planning and International Engagement; and Claudette Austin, Dean of the Faculty of Education and Humanities.

The second session of the day featured a graduation celebration for participants of the first Creole writing class of The University of Guyana. First Lady Sandra Granger was in attendance and gave a



Presenters

It also aims to show that our native languages hold the key to sustainable development – something that is realised by linguists, environmentalists, anthropologists, educators and, more recently, governments.

Professor Harold Ramkissoon: *A Life in Numbers*

Although he hails from Trinidad and Tobago, Professor Emeritus Harold Ramkissoon has worked alongside Guyanese scientists for over two decades and considers Guyana his second home. So having unveiled his new autobiography earlier in the year at The University of the West Indies St Augustine Campus, the eminent mathematician held another launch at The University of Guyana's Education Lecture Theatre on February 14, 2018.

The book, entitled 'My Journey – The Autobiography of Harold Ramkissoon', takes readers on a fascinating journey into the worlds of science, technology, academia and politics. Professor Ramkissoon made the decision to write the book in 2014, believing, he said, "It is not often that mathematicians get to chronicle their life story". He hopes it serves as an inspiration for young people and encourages students 'our future leaders' to strive for excellence.

In his welcome at the launch, Vice-Chancellor Professor Ivelaw Griffith stated: "This event is a part of our contribution to celebrating our heroes" – making reference to the Dave Martins song 'Where Are Your Heroes'. "We need to celebrate our heroes, among which are our literacy heroes, heroes of the developing world of economics, and our heroes in history. Young people need to be inspired by our heroes, so that they can emulate them."

Marcel Hutson, Chief Education Officer at the Ministry of Education,



Professor Harold Ramkissoon



Audience members



**The Vice-Chancellor of UG
addresses audience**

expressed his happiness to be part of such a significant occasion. He declared that Professor Ramkissoon's life story is "a testimony that the beginning of your life does not have to determine the outcome" and implored students present to apply themselves to their studies and pursue a better life – quoting Winston Churchill as saying: "Success is not final, failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts".

GTT DONATES \$3M TO UG



Audience and Stakeholder representatives



A section of the audience

As part of GTT's Innov8 Summit, held to promote and develop Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in Guyana, the telecommunications company has given a \$3 million grant to The University of Guyana (UG). The announcement was made at the launch of the summit on March 5, 2018.

Speaking at the event, Vice-Chancellor of The University of Guyana, Professor Ivelaw Griffith, spoke of the importance of connecting the University to the wider community and world – and highlighted the need for improvements in science and technology, as well as the establishment of a Diaspora Engagement Centre. This, he added, will allow UG to push the envelope both domestically and internationally, and facilitate innovative research in order to build a better Guyana.

According to GTT Chief Executive Officer, Justin Nedd, "The Innov8 initiative fund is dedicated to STEM work in Guyana." The company hopes to give at least \$200 million annually to help the continued development of youth and to empower children.

Also present at the launch were Professor Michael Scott, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic Engagement; Professor Paloma Mohamed, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Philanthropy, Alumni and Civic Engagement; Calvin Bernard, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences; and Professor Leyland Lucas, Dean of the School of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation; along with other lecturers of The University of Guyana, students and strategic partners of GTT.



GTT Chief Executive Officer Justin Nedd

Campus Prize-Giving Ceremony



Professor Ivelaw Griffith with representatives of the first place winner, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry

At the prize-giving ceremony, Vice-Chancellor Professor Ivelaw Griffith explained that Open/Career Day is an opportunity for prospective students and other visitors to learn what The University of Guyana -has to offer, saying: “We cannot assume people know.” Declaring this year’s event to have been a success, the Vice-Chancellor called on those present to celebrate their achievement, but also to keep working to improve and ensure sustainable development.

The winners of this year’s Open/Career Day Campus Competition were announced in a special award ceremony held at the Education Lecture Theatre, Turkeyen Campus, on March 1, 2018.

Six sections of The University of Guyana participated in the annual contest, namely the Faculties of Agriculture and Forestry, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Education and Humanities, Health Sciences, Natural Sciences, and the Registry. Judging their efforts were (Chief Judge) Bernice Williams Bovell, former Assistant Registrar, Admissions; Leisa Somrah, Communications Consultant, UG; and Isaiah Luther, artist and art instructor.

Although the judges noted that the competition was close, they selected three winners and presented trophies to the first-prize winner, the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry; second-place winner, the Faculty of Earth and Environmental Sciences; and the Registry, which came in third place. All other participants of the Open/Career Day activities, both internal and external, were given certificates of appreciation for their participation.



Right: The Vice-Chancellor and the first, second and third place winners

DAVE MARTINS BRINGS 'IS WE OWN' CONCERT TO ESSEQUIBO



Dave Martins and his band

As the sun set in the Cinderella county of Essequibo on March 10, 2018, crowds of men, women and children flocked to see Guyanese legend Dave Martins and his band, who had come to Anna Regina for a special performance.

In his opening remarks, the Regional Executive Officer of Essequibo, Rupert Hopkinson, joked: "Normally I speak at formal events, but today it is different. I have no time to waste – I'm here to dance!" And dance he did.

A performer from the Katana Dance Group took to the stage first, before Dave Martins came on and belted out song after song, including 'Is We Own', 'Cricket In The Jungle', 'I Wanna Be A Puppy' and 'Boyhood Days'. The crowd danced and sang along, laughing as Mr Martins paused at intervals throughout the show to reflect on stories from his own boyhood days in Guyana. "He real funny, boi!" remarked one audience member.



Above: (far right, front row) Former statesman Isahak Basir and a section of the audience

Mr Martins, who has lived in the Caribbean as well as Canada, said his inspiration to write comes from his own life experiences in Guyana, as well as those of other overseas-based Guyanese with whom he interacts. "Ideas can come from anywhere," he explained.

The Dave Martins and Band concert series is a University of Guyana Artist-in-Residence initiative, organised by the Philanthropy, Alumni and Civic Engagement (PACE) Office and the Public Relations Division. The first concert was held at the sea-wall bandstand, with the Essequibo visit marking the second in what is hoped to be a nationwide tour.



Above: (in centre) Regional Executive Officer Rupert Hopkinson and a section of the audience

Former statesman and recipient of the Cacique Crown of Honour Isahak Basir thanked the University for bringing the event to the region. "It was a great cultural show," he said. "We have been waiting for many years for such an initiative and we hope that there is more to come."

At the end of the show, the audience shouted "More!" and "Encore!" – to which Mr Martins responded: "What happen, y'all bed wet? Go home!"

PERSONALITY PROFILE

DR JACQUELINE MURRAY : *A Quest for Knowledge*

As the Interim Director of the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education at The University of Guyana, Dr Jacqueline Murray knows a thing or two about the importance of motivation when it comes to self-study. So it's quite fitting that she recently completed her doctorate in Business Administration following a five-year period of study with Edinburgh Napier University in the United Kingdom.

Dr Murray previously served as the Interim Deputy Director of the Institute in 2016, prior to which she was the Assistant Director of Berbice Campus for approximately two years. Throughout this period she assiduously studied, something she attributes to a need to learn and a thirst for knowledge. "I love research and my strength lies in the methodology section," said Dr Murray, who considers herself the perennial student. "I have been studying for a long time, and new topics continue to spark my interest."

She began her educational journey in Berbice at the New Amsterdam Mission Chapel Congregational School (now the New Amsterdam Primary School), before moving on to the New Amsterdam Multilateral School. She later became a teacher, ironically at the same Multilateral School, before heading to Georgetown to pursue a Diploma and subsequently a Degree in Accountancy at The University of Guyana.

She reflected with enthusiasm on her classroom experiences as a student at the University and remembered one influential staff member in particular, who she said always made his classes fun and interesting: "There was this amazing lecturer by the name of Anand Persaud. As I sat in his classroom, I admired his lecture style and the way he knew his material. I began to think: I want to lecture and I wouldn't mind being a person like him, who knows his material."



Later on, she decided to pursue her Masters in Finance Accounting and Management (MSc) at The University of Bradford in the United Kingdom. "Those things are so easy to aspire to until you actually try it," she said with a chuckle. "Then you realise how challenging they can be." Subsequently she did a Masters in Education (MEd) at The University of Guyana, before pursuing her doctorate.

At times, during her doctoral studies, she experienced feelings of uncertainty, wondering if she would be able to cope with the new challenges and demands. However she persevered and is thankful to have completed the programme.

Today, Dr Murray uses her extensive knowledge and expertise to facilitate the continuous development of the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education. Her vision is that the Institute will one day provide distance education and be renamed The University of Guyana Open Campus.

The Vice-Chancellor, the Renaissance team and staff of The University of Guyana congratulate Dr Jacqueline Murray on this special achievement.

VICE-CHANCELLOR HOSTS COCKTAIL RECEPTION FOR FOOD & NUTRITION SECURITY TEAM



CONVERSATIONS ON LAW & SOCIETY : **Boundaries, Barriers or Bridges**



Ambassadors Keith George, Cedric Joseph and Major General (Retired) Joe Singh

The University of Guyana hosted its second event on the ‘Conversations on Law and Society’ on February 1, 2018, at the Theatre Guild, Georgetown.

The series explores issues that are current and relevant to the development of Guyana. For its second discourse, participants examined the legal ramifications of social issues and the social implications of legal issues in an effort to stimulate debate and discussions pertinent to resolving critical border issues.

Presentations were made by the Ambassador to Suriname Keith George, Ambassador Cedric Joseph, former Head of the Frontiers Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Major General (Ret.) Joe Singh.

The timing of the event turned out to be propitious as it came soon after the announcement by the UN Secretary-General on January 30, 2018, that he was referring the territorial controversy between Guyana and Venezuela to the International Court of Justice.

Fifty years of obstruction is ending, Ambassador Joseph told those gathered: “If Venezuela says they are not going to the Court, I think taking into account whatever case we put up – the history of the Geneva Agreement – we will have to show that jurisdiction is acknowledged.

We will have to make the first move to Court and see if Venezuela will stay out.”

Venezuela claims the border issue is a political one and was settled by the 1899 Tribunal Award. However, Ambassador Joseph said it is not a political matter and stated that Venezuela would have to advance legal arguments to show that Guyana’s case is legally null and void. Ambassador George said he is hopeful that Venezuela participates in the judicial process, however so far this appears unlikely.

During the probing and edifying question and answer session that followed the presentations, it was argued that according to Article 36 (parts 1 & 2) of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, both Guyana and Venezuela must consent for the case to go before the International Court of Justice.



Audience members

A subsequent ‘Conversations on Law and Society’ event was held on April 11, 2018, at Herdmanston Lodge and featured former Chancellor of the Judiciary Carl Singh, who is also Inaugural Jurist-in-Residence and Head of the Law Department of The University of Guyana.

FIRST MEETING OF UG PRESS BOARD

The Editorial Advisory Board of the recently-established University of Guyana Press (UGP) held its inaugural meeting on Saturday, January 20, 2018 at Duke Lodge, Duke Street, Kingston, Georgetown and laid the foundation for its work this year and beyond.

The Board, which is headed by Professor George (Ken) Danns of The University of North Georgia and a former lecturer at The University of Guyana (UG), is comprised of distinguished scholars and respected professionals from within and beyond Guyana. UGP was established in 2017 following the signing of a partnership agreement between The University of Guyana and Ian Randle Publishers of Jamaica.



Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ivelaw Griffith, members of the Editorial Advisory Board and University staffers



In outlining its work plan for 2018 and beyond, the Board agreed to publish four sets of products: books, monographs, scholarly journals, and digital materials. In relation to books, the first is expected to be “Dynamics of Caribbean Diaspora Engagement: People, Policy, Practice,” which is one of the outcomes of the Diaspora Engagement Conference hosted by the University in July 2017.

His Excellency President David Granger has agreed to write the book’s Foreword. In addition to manuscripts submitted for consideration, UGP will also solicit works in keeping with its themes and reprint classics of Guyanese history, politics, literature, and other areas.



Dr Fitzgerald Yaw, Director, Office of Strategic Initiatives, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ivelaw Griffith, UG, Professor George (Ken) Danns, North Georgia University and Chairman of the Editorial Advisory Board



PRESS BOARD MEETING cont'd

As regards journals, it was decided to put on a firm footing the long-standing and respected University of Guyana journal called "Transition," which has had a chequered publication history. Working Papers and Occasional Papers will be core monograph publications, with "The Renaissance Papers" being a part of the Occasional Papers series.

The 2018 Renaissance Papers will publish the lectures delivered at the Distinguished Lectures named for Distinguished Professor CY Thomas, Professor Emeritus Sister Noel Menezes, and Dr Ulric Trotz, as well as the Professorial Lectures delivered by Professors Michael Scott and Paloma Mohamed.



To boost UG's work in Biodiversity and its support of the Government's Green State Initiative, the Board decided to launch a new journal, to be called "The Guyana Shield", and it established a Task Team to help implement the decision. The Team is headed by Professor Percy Hintzen of Florida International University, and it includes Dr Ulric Trotz of the Caribbean Climate Change Centre, Dr Paulette Bynoe and Mr Alim Hosein from UG, and Dr. David Singh of Conservation International.

In addition to Vice-Chancellor Ivelaw Griffith and Board Chair George Danns, the meeting was attended by: Ms Christine Randle (Ian Randle Publishers); Professor Percy Hintzen (Florida International University); Dr Paulette Bynoe (UG); Professor Gomathinayagam Subramanian (UG); Mr Alim Hosein (UG); Dr Annette Insanally (UWI Mona); Dr Kimani Nehusi (Temple University); Dr Keith Nurse (UWI Cave Hill); Professor Olajide Oladipo (City University of New York); Dr David Singh (Conservation International); Dr Kelwyn Thomas (Morehouse School of Medicine); Dr Ulric Trotz (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre); Dr Joseph Tyndall (University of Florida College of Medicine), and Dr Fitzgerald Yaw (UG).



Dr Penelope Seibert, University of Nottingham, Dr Dennis Canterbury, Eastern Connecticut State University, Professor Stafford Griffith, (UWI) Mona and Mr Vivian Williams, Vivian Williams and Associates, NY

While Dr Dennis Canterbury (Eastern Connecticut State University); Professor Stafford Griffith (UWI Mona); Dr Penelope Seibert (University of Nottingham), and Mr Vivian Williams, Vivian Williams and Associates, New York, joined the meeting by Skype.

Ian Randle Publishers Managing Director Christine Randle led the meeting's review of the work done so far on the UGP website, which is expected to be released at the end of February. A competition for a permanent UGP logo will be held soon. As well, Vice-Chancellor Griffith announced that the University of Guyana Press office will be staffed by the Office of Strategic Initiatives, with Ms Danniebelle Mohabir serving as Manager. UGP also has a Management Advisory Board, which is headed by Ambassador Ronald Austin, Director of the Foreign Service Institute. That Board will hold its inaugural meeting soon.

Board members applauded the formation of the Press, with several of them noting that it had long been promised. Indeed, Mr Alim Hosein recalled that his first job at UG in 1984 was to work with a UG Press that never materialised. According to Vice-Chancellor Griffith, "UGP is a historic milestone in the maturation of the University. It is an integral part of Project Renaissance, and it is intended to boost the institution's research enterprise and overall credibility." He also noted that the research and publishing pursuits will not be limited to academic staff, but will include post-graduate and undergraduate students, especially those in the undergraduate research programme.

THE BEST IN TRACK & FIELD

The sun was out in all its glory for the Annual Track and Field Championships of The University of Guyana, held at the Leonora Track and Field Stadium on March 14, 2018.

The day began with a colourful ‘march-past’, which saw the stadium filled with shades of blue, yellow, green, red and purple – each representing participating faculties, plus a team from the



Berbice Campus.

Students, lecturers and other staff of the University, as well as public spectators, perched on stands to watch an array of activities, including track and field races for both male and female competitors. There were also 100-, 200-, 800-, 1,500- and 5,000-metre races, as well as the long jump, shot put, javelin, high jump, long jump, triple jump and discus.

Other activities included a football competition, plus novelty



games such as the lime-and-spoon and needle-and-thread races. There was also music, food and drinks to refresh attendees and a great atmosphere all around, with students and lecturers collaborating to make the day a success.

After all the scores were added up, the Faculty of Education and



The faculty of Education and Humanities was awarded first place with a total of 203 points. While the Faculty of Health Sciences came in second place with a total of 180 points, and the Berbice Campus took third place with 152 points.

Norwell Hinds, President of The University of Guyana Students' Society, said the championships are an excellent opportunity for the University to showcase its athletic talent. He complemented the organisers on a great effort and noted that the turnout was



bigger than last year – although it could have been even larger. This, Mr Hinds suggested, may be due to a number of impeding factors, such as the location of the event. He also suggested the use of more marketing strategies, such as a team mascot, adding: “We need to convince students that it’s in their interest to participate.”

THE ROAD TO FOOD & NUTRITION SECURITY



next phase of its work, which involves visits to model food-security entities overseas. At the top of the list is the Center for Food Security and Entrepreneurship at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill.



The 35-member, broad-based team was appointed earlier this year by Vice-Chancellor Ivelaw Griffith following a national stakeholders consultation held in November 2017. Minister of Agriculture Noel Holder delivered the keynote address at the event, which involved officials from the Ministries of Agriculture, Public Health and Education, the Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of



The group's inaugural meeting consisted of a two-day exercise on January 25 and 26, 2018. On the first day, members held 'Look, Listen and Learn' sessions at Global Seafood Distributors, GSA, NAREI, Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA) and the Satyadeow Sawh Aquaculture Station. On the second day, the full team met on the Turkeyen Campus to begin work on goals, the design of the Institute and a timeline for action, among other matters. In attendance were representatives from the Edward Beharry Group of Companies, FAO, IICA, Demerara Distillers Ltd, GLDA, UG and the Ministries of Public Health, Agriculture, Communities and Education.



the United Nations, the Inter-American Institute of Cooperation for Agriculture (IICA), the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI), and University officials.

The team studying the feasibility of an Institute of Food and Nutrition Security (IFANS) being established at the University of Guyana (UG) is preparing for the

The team is co-chaired by Professor O'Garro, Founding Director of UWI's Center for Food Security and Entrepreneurship, and Guyanese-born food scientist Professor Verian Thomas of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee, Florida. The FAO's representative in Guyana, Reuben Robertson, who is a member of the feasibility team, has provided UG with a US\$50,000 grant to support the team's work.



Vice-Chancellor Griffith wrapped up proceedings by calling on team members to remain engaged with the process, inform colleagues at their institutions about the plans, and help garner public support for the initiative. He also encouraged them to seek to leverage resources to aid the work of the feasibility team and of the Institute when it is formally established. The team undertook to present a first draft report to the Vice-Chancellor by the end of June, after which there will be stakeholder consultations in various parts of the country to discuss the report before it is finalised.

On February 28, 2018, the Vice-Chancellor and members of the feasibility team updated Minister Holder on the team work.



According to Vice-Chancellor Griffith, “The advent of oil and gas makes it even more important that we do not forget the essence of what we are: an agricultural nation, with wonderful potential to satisfy national and regional food and nutrition needs. I trust our nation will use some of the soon-to-be-available oil and gas bounty to invest intentionally in agriculture and education.” He added, “It would be great to launch the Institute on this year’s World Food Day, in October.”

VALEDICTORIAN ADDRESS:

TRESHAN BUDHRAM

“As graduates of the University of Guyana, we can do nothing and we can do anything”

All protocols observed. My fellow graduates, today marks the end of our 1,460-day metamorphosis through the University. We are the graduating class of 2017. Let us applaud ourselves. As my eyes rest on everyone seated here today, I can sense a wave of emotions. For families, I can sense the profound joy you have in knowing that the child you have witnessed fall a thousand times while learning to walk can now stride confidently across this stage. We thank you for your unwavering support. For the lecturers, I can imagine the immense pride you have in knowing that the students you have corrected a million times are now leaving this University as critical enquirers. We thank you for your informed guidance. For friends, I can feel your genuine excitement in knowing that the companions you have helped a zillion times are now one degree hotter. We thank you for your kindness and compassion.

Graduates, for many of us graduation is actually quite awkward. It's a moment when we are torn between the joy of our memories and the excitement of our future. Should we look back on what could be noted as part of the best years of our lives? Times filled with joy, parading up and down the corridors looking for a class that we had already passed a thousand times. No, really, it was quite joyful – that moment when we realized that we didn't need a gym membership because those stairs were made to keep us fit. Or those moments when we passed by the canteen and the smell of curry knocked our senses for a boundary. And that egg ball... a superb start for the vigorous tutorials with our lecturers. Really, it was like playing basketball: hoping to all the Gods that when



A section of the graduating class of Berbice Campus 2017

we shoot our responses they find themselves into that net somehow. Or should we focus on the next stage in this journey called life? Many of us have been impatiently waiting for this day, and now we just want to hit pause – to slow it down and savour the last fleeting moment.



Valedictorian Treshan Budhram giving his address at the 16th Convocation ceremony on November 18, 2017.

Ladies and gentlemen, the kind of attention that current students of The University of Guyana Berbice Campus get these days is far from what we received. Basically, if we didn't have an old friend who had been in University for a year, we were totally lost on many things. However, as time progressed, the University staff became more than acquaintances. They opened their arms and wrapped us with their guidance throughout every step of our 1,460-day journey.

The moment when we walked into our first class, graduation was the last thought on our minds. From that moment, many of us learnt new things outside of academia. Like how the bottom of a coffee bottle tastes after we realized that we had scraped the last bit out and had to throw 'lil hat water' inside and shake it up a bit. Or that time when we were super hungry and found ourselves eating week-old leftovers. And let's not forget those moments when we begged the car drivers to 'pack we up like sardines' just because we didn't want to leave one, or two, or three of our friends waiting for transportation on that lonely, dark road right behind you.

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Some of us also mastered the art of persuasion – kudos to those of us who found innovative ways to convince our managers to give us time off to arrive at class early. However, some of us were not so lucky to be part of a supportive team, so we took the back benches. Not because we liked it that way, but because work had demanded too much from us.

Graduates, as the time passed, our experiences at this University evolved, and we too needed to evolve. In the words of Maya Angelou: “If you don't like something, change it.” There are many things here that we don't like, and because we accepted them, current students might inherit some of these problems – if they don't seek to change them.

I find that many Guyanese complain about too many things in life. Instead of finding ways to change it, some of us resort to settling with the circumstances. I'm here to remind you that only dust settles, and we are not settled dust. We are a robust melting pot of different races, beliefs, values, backgrounds and experiences – and we will not be stopped.

What we have accomplished here today represents not just our success, but also the success of our parents, friends, lecturers and mentors. As individuals, the onus is on us not to become settled dust, but to become, in the words of Maya Angelou, “Dust that flies.” As graduates of the University of Guyana, we can do nothing and we can do anything.

As the great Henry Ford said, “Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right.” We fear not finding the ideal job. Friends, this is the reality: we may not find that job or that career we hoped for, but that doesn't mean we should accept it. If you can't find that job, create it. Make it happen. We need to use what we have learnt, and not allow external circumstances to define who we are.

Let us use our degrees to become innovators. Let us believe that we can achieve anything. We came on campus with different backgrounds and life experiences, we can now leave this campus as a collective unit: ready to transform our communities and thus a nation we can be proud of. We are the class of 2017.



Valedictorian address Berbice campus graduating class of 2017

No matter what faculty we come from – be it Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Agriculture, or Education and Humanities – we are all members of this one University community.

Our country needs our dedication, commitment and diligence. Our country deserves our time, investment and creativity. Our communities require our expertise, wisdom and empathy.

Let us own our mistakes and our failures in the same way in which we praise our successes and achievements, because only then can we take up our rightful roles and allow Guyana to evolve.

We are ripe for the picking. I urge you to believe in yourself: give yourself that opportunity to press against the shoulders of mediocrity, defeat it and press on to make this country great.

In closing, Mahatma Gandhi said: “As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world – that is the myth of the atomic age – as in being able to remake ourselves”. You must represent the change you want to see. Now let's go make it happen!

I thank you.

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S MEETINGS WITH HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA TO GUYANA AND THE NON-RESIDENT AMBASSADOR OF GEORGIA TO GUYANA



VC'S MEETING WITH HIGH COMMISSIONER OF CANADA TO GUYANA



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 10 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.