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Editorial

Resilience in time of COVID-19

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We are once again excited to present the Issue # 8 of MEDULINK, Newsletter of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, the University of the West Indies (FMS, UWI). I am honored to be Editor for this publication and congratulate all who have contributed to its completion.

In keeping with the One UWI theme and philosophy, the current newsletter has contributions from programmes at the FMS on all campus territories/sites (Cave Hill, Mona, Nassau, St. Augustine). The mandate for the newsletter is to disseminate health professions education activities occurring at any of the Faculties of Medical Sciences in the UWI. To that end the current issue presents articles on Innovations in teaching, Research and Practice,

Assessment and Evaluation, Student Forum, Excellence in scholarly activity, Social Accountability, and Co-curricular activities, and concludes with summaries of activities and developments in the faculties.

This Issue is themed '*Resilience in the time of COVID-19*'. It has been a little more than a year since COVID -19 pandemic entered the Caribbean. As stewards of medical and other health professions education we have been forced to pivot and re-engineer teaching and learning across all programmes and disciplines. The FMS and UWI temporarily stopped all teaching in March 2020 to enable implementation of emergency remote teaching and learning, which began April 2020. The ensuing period has been characterised by steep learning curve, adaptation,

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innovations in teaching, learning and assessment and engagement in social responsibility. In this Issue of Medulink several articles illustrate the FMS' agility and resilience in the time of COVID-19.

Health Professions Innovation and Adaptation

Garbutt and colleagues embarked on an initiative [the Intern-Tutor Programme] in the Department of Child & Adolescent Health, Mona with aim to mitigate the gap of decreased clinical exposure among rotating interns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this initiative rotating interns' competence in knowledge and practice of paediatrics is optimised while also developing teaching/training skills. In essence becoming Intern-Tutors who provide academic peer support to final year students during their Child Health rotation.

The School of Dentistry, Mona (Dr Thaon Jones) developed a creative solution to the challenge of decreased student options for clinical training

caused by COVID-mandated restrictions and protocols. By retrofitting the existing open clinical area to individual units capable of managing aerosol-inducing procedures, the school expanded the existing space and enabled all students to achieve their expected clinical training learning outcomes.

At the FMS, St Augustine Dr Pradeep Sahu describes the transition of Problem Based Learning from the traditional face to face to online administration, because of COVID-19 challenges and restrictions. He outlines the successes, barriers, and challenges to implementing the process but highlights the "silver lining" going forwards that technology must be integrated in the administration of PBL.

Outreach and social responsibility

The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre (MAWC), UWI, Mona answered the call to service with its critical collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Jamaica. Through the initiative

spearheaded by Dr. Tana Ricketts-Roomes and Prof Eldemire-Shearer, the centre assisted with the COVID-19 national vaccination programme becoming one of the most successful vaccination sites. The collective efforts of medical, technical, and administrative colleagues and volunteers (primarily medical students) resulted in approximately 1500 vaccines being administered daily (7700 over 5-days) during the first vaccination blitz and 17000 administered up to June 25, 2021. Two students (Adam Griffith and Eamon Young) chronicle their personal perspective as volunteers in this vaccination blitz at the MAWC. Another student, Dowesha Williams demonstrated social responsibility in these times of COVID by conducting free remedial classes for children (primary school level) in her community who did not have the necessary resources to access online teaching and learning.

The University of the West Indies Online Conference Services (TUCS Online), Cave Hill was initially developed as a stopgap to allow the

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continuation of Continuing Medical Education during the COVID-19 pandemic but expanded the offerings to provide free CAPE Science online revision sessions over a 2-week period during Easter break to students of CARICOM. This highly successful project was well received, and the organizers must be commended for optimizing educational achievement of regional high school students in the face of the pandemic challenges.

The Professionalism, Ethics and Communication in Health Course (PECH), FMS, St Augustine has been in existence for the past 5 years with the mission to engage future health professionals in these core competencies. The PECH Practicum component is highlighted in the Newsletter and describes the numerous and diverse (over 200) community-based service-learning projects in which students have participated.

New initiatives

Dr Wendy Sealy describes the imminent launch of the Post Graduate Diploma in Paediatric Nursing (Sep 2021) a collaboration between the Shaw Centre for Paediatric Excellence, The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) Toronto, Canada, and the Government of Barbados. The aim is to prepare nurses with the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies in paediatric nursing, and this initiative will contribute to the overall mission to establish Barbados as a Centre of Paediatric Excellence in the Eastern Caribbean.

Dr Keerti Singh and colleagues initiated an online yoga programme to improve the wellbeing of students during this pandemic period. This well received programme extended throughout 2020/2021 academic year and participants expressed continued interest in the programme to the next academic year also.

Dr. Mike Campbell (Senior Lecturer, Behavioural Science/Psychology,

FMS, Cave Hill) outlines the incorporation of comprehensive care for transgender people in the undergraduate medical curriculum.

Medical Students - Excellence in extracurricular activities

Shanice Musgrave (President, MSA and Medical Sciences Rep, Guild of Students, Cave Hill, Barbados) published a book "Making it count: 21 Days of Motivation for Caribbean Students". Against her background of pre-university academic disappointments, the book captures the heart of a fighter and overcomer aimed to inspire and empower readers to persevere and change. Janique McKnight (MBBS Class of 2023, FMS, Mona) was the winner of the Short Story Competition put on by the Phillip Sherlock Centre for Creative Arts, Mona. Homing in on her passionate interest in literature, she wrote a story entitled "Blighia Sapida" and swept the field of all competitors.

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Scholarly Activity

Dr Tomlin Paul (Dean, FMS, Mona) wrote a thought-provoking opinion piece on Prioritizing Fitness for Purpose in Health Professions Education. He challenged the status quo that the quality of the trained health professional must be guided by fitness for purpose - purpose of who we serve. Our clients are characterised by multiple variables - gender, race, economic status, sexual orientation, and other health disparities to name a few. It is therefore critical for us to interrogate the curriculum, identify the gaps and address issues for health professions education.

On February 3, 2021, five academics from the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Mona were promoted to the rank Professor. The article curated by Prof. Pierre summarises the key scholarly attributes of each new professor. From the Bahamas, Dr Krista Nottage (Year 3 Resident, DM Surgery) described her mind-blowing experience while pursuing a prestigious fellowship at the New England Journal of Medicine, Boston,

Massachusetts. While Dr Raleigh Butler (Associate Lecturer and Gynaecologist, Nassau) outlines the cost-effective, efficient, and evidence-based approach to optimising cervical cancer screening in the Bahamas.

The School of Veterinary Medicine showcased the 2021 Undergraduate Students' Research Day. With over 100 in attendance at this virtual meeting, twelve student groups presented topics across the disciplines.

Activities

The newsletter closes with highlights of activities at the St Augustine Campus - World Health Day 2021 (School of Pharmacy), Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development, FMS Virtual Open Day 2021, World Blood Donor Day Symposium, Caribbean Community of Practice for Health Policy and Systems Research Webinar Series, Climate Change and Health leaders Fellowship Training Programme, West Indian Immunological Society, Planetary Health Annual Meeting and Festival.

In closing, we look forward to your comments and suggestions regarding this Issue of Medulink. Please feel free to contact us. Best wishes and pleasant reading.

Acknowledgements

We are particularly encouraged by the editorial collaboration between the Centre for Medical Sciences Education (CMSE) and the Medical Education Units at each of the main Campus sites. Mr. Michael Khan from the CMSE, St. Augustine has again provided excellent graphic design expertise and advice. Special thanks for the support by the editorial board comprising the leadership in Medical Education at Cave Hill (Dr. Azim Majumder, Dr. Colette George and Dr. Peter Adams), Mona (Prof. Russell Pierre and Prof. JM Branday), and St. Augustine (Prof. Bidyadhar Sa and Ms Marsha Ivey) campuses, and Nassau (Dr. Robin Roberts).

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Intern-Tutor Programme: competency-based training initiative in child health

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On March 11, 2020 Covid-19 was declared a Pandemic by the World Health Organization (1). To mitigate the impact, public health-mandated infection control protocols were enacted, and some countries closed their borders. The impact on the educational system was far-reaching. Traditional face to face instruction was discontinued and all teaching and learning activities were shifted to online modality (2). At international level, Canadian and UK medical students were concerned how the pandemic would

affect their graduation timeline amongst others issues, as only two weeks had remained from their core curriculum. Students were reassured by the emergency modifications that were instituted to enable their completion (3), (4). In the UK the General Medical Council provisionally registered final year medical students once graduated and deemed fit from their schools (5). Third and fourth year rotations were paused in Canada (3). In 2020 due to the pandemic-mandated protocols the Imperial College of London and

King's College both hosted online exit examinations as Open Book Examinations (4), (6).

At The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus classes and instruction were suspended on March 13th, 2020 with five weeks remaining for the completion of the final year cohort in the undergraduate medical programme. During the period March 13 to April 13, 2020, faculty emergently modified courses and adopted remote learning approaches for completion of students' learning

outcomes. Final year medical students completed all instruction remotely and all exit assessments were administered online and remotely, without the traditional face to face clinical evaluations component. Successful final year students received provisional registration with the Medical Councils and began their internship rotations.

In addition to disrupting the traditional approach to instruction of clinical sciences in the undergraduate medical programme, COVID-19

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pandemic also reduced the exposure to typical clinical material for medical students and interns because of the shift in demands on clinical services required to manage the epidemic. The Department of Child & Adolescent Health and the Health Professions Education Unit embarked on an initiative: the Intern-Tutor Programme. We aimed to mitigate the gap of decreased clinical exposures among rotating medical interns through providing clinical encounter simulations while training medical interns to teach common paediatric skills.

The objectives were to optimize the interns' knowledge, competency, and practice of common paediatric skills given the Covid-19 challenges, develop problem-solving competence in common paediatric clinical

	PARTICIPANT RESPONSES (%)		
	SA/A	U	SD/D
SKILLS SESSIONS			
<i>Provided an opportunity for revision of theory in a structured format</i>	100		
<i>Provided an opportunity for practice of skill</i>	93	7	
<i>In person small group skill sessions allowed for discussion and clarification of concerns</i>	100		
<i>Presenters displayed thorough knowledge of subject area</i>	100		
CASE- BASED DISCUSSIONS			
<i>Provided an opportunity for revision</i>	93	7	
<i>Discussion of cases helped in my understanding of patients who had similar presentations</i>	86	7	7
<i>Presenters of case based discussions showed relevance of topic to daily paediatric practice</i>	100		
<i>Online format was conducive to case-based discussions</i>	86	14	
<i>Presenters displayed thorough knowledge of subject area</i>	100		
TEACHING SESSIONS			
<i>Teaching sessions allowed me to demonstrate my understanding of topics</i>	100		
<i>I am more likely to continue my teaching and interaction with junior colleagues beyond this rotation</i>	93		7

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

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presentations using a case-based approach, train interns as tutors for instruction in paediatric skills using simulated patients and specified equipment, and implement a training curriculum to fulfill the extended roles as Intern-Tutors. Participating interns would be provided a certificate of completion as part fulfilment of the requirement for the Paediatric internship rotation

The Intern-Tutor programme was implemented in February 2021 with the first cohort of 18 interns rotating through the Department. Skills training was conducted face to face by paediatric faculty while maintaining COVID-19 protocols. Common paediatric skills training included anthropometry, use of paediatric growth

charts, respiratory skills (nebulization, spacers and peak flow meters) and practice and interpretation of paediatric vital signs. Case based discussions were used for revision of common paediatric topics utilizing the Zoom platform. Sessions were conducted either at 8am or 4 pm to minimize workplace disruption.

Fourteen of 18 (77%) participants provided preliminary feedback (see Table). Majority had positive perceptions of aspects of the training programme.

Additional participants' comments regarding the programme included “an excellent programme allowing for development and continued learning”; “good revision and learning experience”; “fulfilling to be able to

pass on knowledge to the juniors”; “standardized skills exposure would be beneficial to students rather than opportunistic exposure”. As of April 2021, the second group of rotating interns joined the intern-tutor programme in the Department of Child & Adolescent Health. We intend to recruit all interns during the 2021/2022 period and provide them an opportunity to review, discuss and clarify common paediatric issues whilst encouraging their participation in peer teaching and training of undergraduate medical students.

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Clinic Closure vs Cubicle Refurbishing

A Practical Clinical Teaching Covid-19 Response

DR THAON JONES

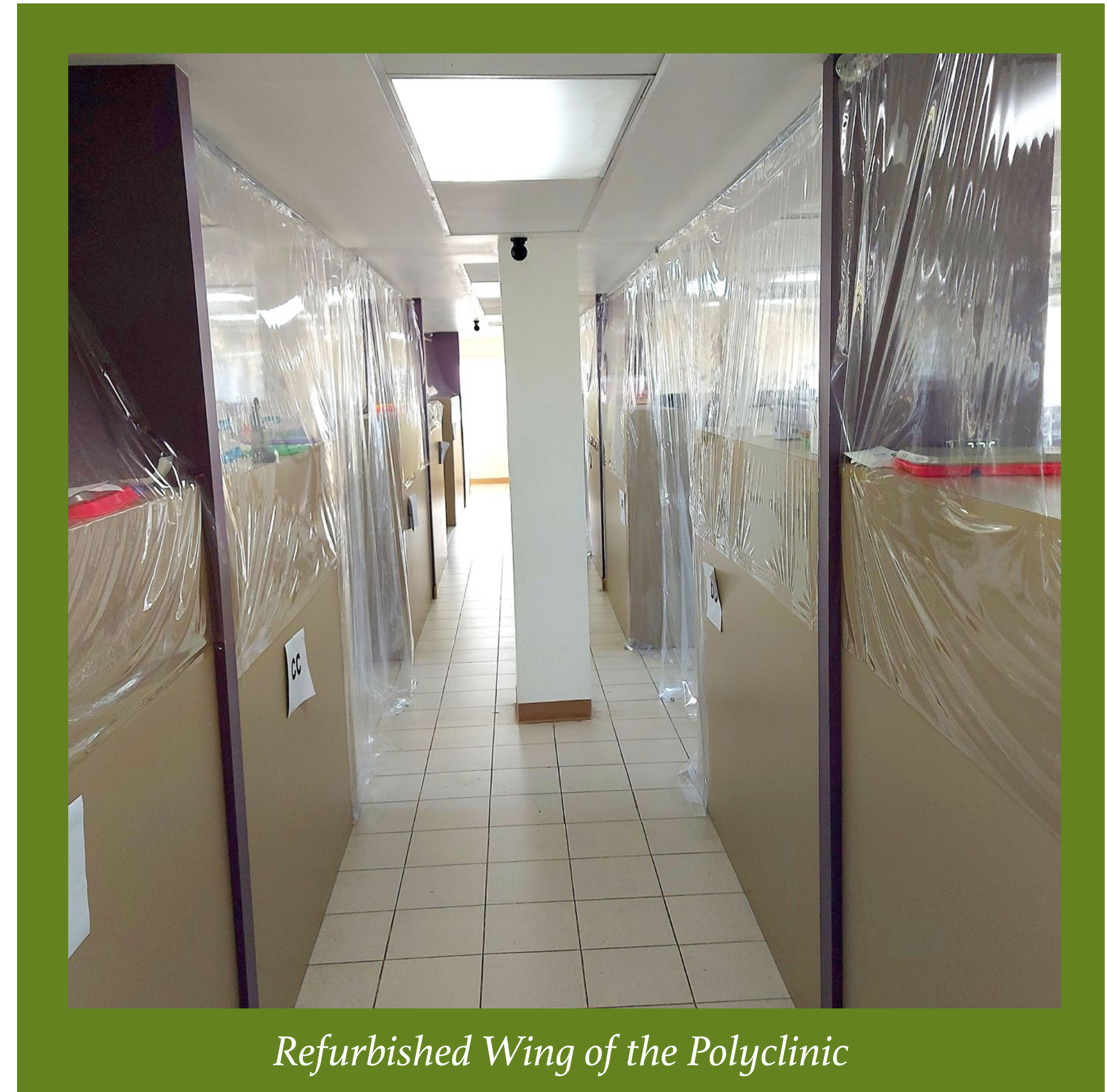
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In March 2020 dental practices globally were mandated by the International Federation of Dentistry, the Center for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, and national authorities on health to stop practicing clinical dentistry. On March 13th, the UWI Mona Dental Polyclinic closed its doors to patient treatment, and with this closure, clinical teaching was suspended.

In the Summer of 2020 support was given for the resumption of dental treatment, but only for emergency treatment. Additionally, teledentistry was encouraged to maintain social distancing. For in-person clinical dentistry a

specified level of Personal Protective Equipment support needed to be in place.

Once the required support was instituted, clinical teaching resumed at the dental polyclinic in October 2020. Upon resumption, students were guided that all aerosol-generating procedures (e.g. cleanings, fillings) were confined to the four surgical rooms, and that non-aerosol procedures could be conducted in their individual cubicles. At the dental polyclinic, there are 20 open operatory cubicles, and four closed-door cubicles, i.e. the Surgical Rooms. With 18 students on the clinical floor, this meant that students' capability



Refurbished Wing of the Polyclinic

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to fulfill their clinical requirements in a timely manner was no longer feasible.

A rotation roster was put in place to accommodate the delayed (due to Covid-19) graduating Class of 2020 primarily, and then adjusted to accommodate the on-track, Class of 2021. The approach partially alleviated the delay, but students lagged meeting their requirements due to the backlog of appointments for aerosol procedures.

The Cubicle Refurbishing Project was imagined through brainstorming exercises. This would involve converting the open-space clinical floor in which 20 cubicles could communicate with each other, to one in which each cubicle simulated one of the 4 closed-door surgical rooms. Stakeholder discussion and engagement (Facilities Manager, Director of Estate Management Department, representative for Campus Projects

Unit, Director School of Dentistry) considered the feasibility of the project.

The project would involve erecting frameworks around each cubicle and using glass to create walls and an entrance door. Although the project was supported by the stakeholders, the likelihood of being financed and completed in the short term was very low. An economically efficient alternative had to be found. The solution was to use hard sheet plastic and curtain rods as a temporary measure and engage student partnership with the project.

The project was divided into two phases. Phase 1 would be student-driven: each student would be given the option of undertaking the labour and material costs for their own Cubicle Refurbishing Project, which the school would refund. Phase 2 would be school-driven: with the school working with the relevant university offices to convert



Individual Refurbished Cubicle



Surgical Room

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the rods and sheets into the metal framework and glass pane fittings at a later stage. The first phase will be temporary, the second, permanent. Students who opted out would continue to book their aerosol-procedures for the 4 surgical rooms.

The first student who agreed to the initiative had the project completed within 3-4 hours. Following this, the other students bought in to the project, and in the end, 16/18 students (89%) undertook Phase 1. As each student completed their individual Cubicle Refurbishing Project, they were removed from the roster for the 4 closed-door rooms. It thus gave them greater flexibility to schedule their patients for aerosol procedures. As a corollary, the students who opted out of the project also benefitted from increased opportunities to book the 4 closed-door rooms.

The result is that students are now able to fulfill their clinical training requirements in a more personal and protected space where the possibility of the transmission of the

Covid-19 virus is greatly reduced, and Covid-19 protocols are primarily under their direct control.

The lesson learnt from the project was that student

engagement, coupled with critical thinking and solution-oriented mindsets resulted in a win-win situation for patients, students and attainment of clinical requirements.



Unfurnished Cubicles

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Online Problem Based Learning Amidst COVID-19 pandemic

Faculty of Medical Sciences, St Augustine Campus Experience

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As in many countries across the globe, as part of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus suspended its face-to-face teaching in March 2020. The limitations of physical presence have accelerated the development of online modes of delivery for various programmes including medical education. To facilitate online teaching, the role of IT units, university/faculty administration, course coordinators, Centre for Medical Sciences Education (CMSE) and Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) played a significant role. Blackboard Collaborate (BBC) through

official myElearning online learning environment is used in the medical school to conduct online teachings.

Historically, instruction in Phase I medicine courses in St. Augustine campus embodies a hybrid system comprising two different and distinct teaching methods, such as Problem Based Learning (PBL) and traditional didactic approaches. The medical school follows the seven-step systematic approach of PBL. Each PBL class comprises 11-13 students and a tutor and the class meets once in a week. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school adapted online PBL following the similar approach as was in face-to-face PBL. Proper training

and orientations were given to the tutors and students for the smooth transition to online PBL. Additionally, tutors were given proper guidance and necessary information by the course coordinators to skilfully facilitate the PBL groups. In online PBL, creating a favourable learning environment, maximizing students' participation and engagement were the priority.

One of the experts from CMSE randomly visited the online PBL sessions and did observation to make sure that classes were going on smoothly. In addition, CMSE also made a survey of students and tutors to identify the advantages and challenges of online PBL.

Further, at the end of PBL classes for each course, both students and tutors gave their written feedback and suggestions for further improvement of the PBL via online mode.

Based on the observations and survey, it was found that both students and tutors were satisfied with the online environment because it was much easier for them to attend the sessions as they did not have to drive to school and simply joined the online from wherever they were. The shy students were very happy to contribute and participate in the discussion process using the chat box in the BBC platform. Students and tutors were comfortable using online platform. The

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use of Google docs for the brainstorming sessions and PowerPoint presentations in BBC were great benefits. Students were of the view that online PBL was as effective as face-to-face PBL. Tutors also expressed positive attitude towards online PBL, but they stated that it was not as effective as face-to-face PBL.

Despite the benefits, our students and tutors experienced some difficulties which need immediate attentions. Some of the major challenges were internet connectivity issue, microphone problem, external disturbances, lack of proper attention and lack of non-verbal communication. There is uncertainty regarding how long this crisis will continue. In such situation integrating technology in PBL and teaching methods may be useful to facilitate medical education in the future.



Chat

Pankaj Kissoonsingh 11:49
chorda tympani b

Daniel Bhoia 26:40
No emotion perhaps
A feeling of euphoria or disinhibition

Candace Cook 01:01:47
There are also ACE2 receptor on basal cells
which is necessary for regeneration of olfactory
epithelium

Vernon Davis 01:02:19
Yes sir! Thank you so much

Ambenique Monroe 01:02:25
Thank you

Iruomachukwu Oguneme 01:02:28
Thank you

Kajal Narinesingh 01:02:33
thank you

Ariel Rudder 01:02:39
thank you

Iruomachukwu Oguneme 01:02:55
umm where are we filling out the pbl forms???



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The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre Vaccination Site

Answering the Call for COVID-19 Vaccination in the most vulnerable

TANA RICKETTS-ROOMES

Lecturer, Department of Community Health & Psychiatry, The UWI, Mona, Jamaica

PROF. DENISE ELDEMIRE-SHEARER

Director, Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre, The UWI, Mona, Jamaica

Background

The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre (MAWC) is a centre located at The University of the West Indies (The UWI), Mona. Under the stewardship of Professor Denise Eldemire Shearer, the centre has as its motto “*Promoting Healthy Ageing*” which came into sharp focus during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The MAWC is committed to the following objectives, among others:

1. Outreach to promote healthy ageing throughout the life course
2. Establishing and maintaining linkages

with national, regional, and international institutions concerned with and working on age-related issues

3. Research
4. Teaching

The University of the West Indies (The UWI) has been an active partner with the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW), Jamaica in the fight against COVID-19 since March 2020 (first confirmed cases). The 3 As of The UWI’s current strategic plan (Access, Alignment, Agility) are reflected in the operations and responses to calls for co-operation/ collaboration, with entities

such as the MOHW. Such collaborations are also a mandate of the MAWC. The opportunity for such a critical collaboration presented itself during the COVID-19 pandemic when the MAWC was approached by the MOHW to become an integral part of national vaccination drive for the most vulnerable to COVID-19 – the elderly population.

The MAWC was considered at the forefront of protecting the elderly population in Jamaica against the COVID-19 virus since it could inform the processes for vaccinating the elderly, including those who



Minister of Health and Wellness greeting student volunteers

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Clients being processed by student volunteers



were non-ambulant or otherwise infirmed, while also providing vaccinations service. In fact, the MAWC is one of few sites providing drive-up vaccinations for persons unable to physically enter a vaccination site. Such a mammoth and critical undertaking of mass vaccination would necessitate the formation of a team with technical, administrative skills and volunteers (including students). Thus, the Mona Aging and Wellness Centre COVID-19 Vaccination Site was formed. The initial mandate of this site was to assist with the vaccination of those 60 years and older, but it has evolved to offer vaccinations to the wider community, inextricably linked with the elderly population in one way or another.

Methodology

The Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW), Jamaica extended a request to the MAWC (in March 2021) to assist with

the COVID-19 national vaccination programme. This undertaking required collaboration of MAWC staff, staff of other departments such as Community Health and Child & Adolescent Health of the Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS), private physicians, Public Health nurses, Registered nurses and also student volunteers from the FMS, The UWI, Mona. The activities at the MAWC site began as a small weekday operation within the confines of the centre which catered to a few hundred persons. It quickly transitioned into a much larger operation which served more than 2000 members of the public daily during vaccination blitzes. Student volunteers assisted with administrative and coordinating activities which were essential to a successful vaccination process. The MAWC vaccination site officially began operation on March 22, 2021, and has involved at least 90 student volunteers thus far. The students

are predominantly from all cohort years of the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) programme. The requisite training was provided by the MOHW and UWI staff. Students roles have included registration of persons to be vaccinated (manually and later, electronically), assistance with COVID-19 vaccination card documentation, data entry for provision of appointments among other vital functions. Students were also integral in successful logistical planning and management of the large numbers of persons during the vaccination blitzes.

Outcomes

At inception the programme accomplished 100 to 200 vaccinations per day, and is now achieving between 400 to 500 vaccines daily. During the blitz approximately 1500 vaccinations were given daily (approximately 7700 vaccinations over 5-days). Up to June 25, 2021 (3

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months since commencing operations), the MAWC has administered almost 17000 vaccines and is one of the most successful sites in Jamaica, in terms of administered vaccinations. As with the Health Corps Volunteer Programme (I), students gained hands-on experience on the management of a mass vaccination programme. Additionally, specified medical students were able to acquire necessary supervised volunteer hours for tuition assistance programmes. Direct supervision was provided by Dr Tana Ricketts-Roomes, lecturer (Community Health) and Family Physician, and overall oversight provided by Professor Denise Eldemire Shearer, Director of the MAWC.

Lessons learned

This initiative is a master class in experiential learning and social responsibility for medical students and faculty, and



Mass vaccination activity



Elderly, the focus of the vaccination blitz



Consultant Paediatricians joined the team of physician volunteers

provides opportunity for students to interact face-to-face with the public at a time of reduced clinical teaching exposure. The vaccination programme also underscores the critical importance of a multidisciplinary approach to public health and the vital functions that volunteers play in any pandemic response, especially in resource-limited settings. The students expressed appreciation for the hands-on experience they received and the satisfaction that they contributed to the national vaccination response with the overall aim to protect the Jamaican population. The FMS mandate of social accountability is also being realised through these activities at the MAWC.

References:

1. Tana Ricketts-Roomes, UWI FMS/ MOHW Health Corps Student Leaders, Tomlin Paul. The UWI FMS/MOWH Health Corps COVID-19 Volunteer Programme – a shining example of social accountability in the face of a public health crisis. Medulink: One Faculty, One UWI. Issue 7, December 2020. pp 21-23. Newsletter on Medical Education for the Faculty of Medical Sciences, The University of the West Indies; available [\[here\]](#).

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Social Accountability as Medical Students

ADAM GRIFFITH & EAMON YOUNG

MB.BS Class of 2023, FMS. The UWI, Mona, Jamaica

As medical doctors in training, we naturally crave exciting, exhilarating, active experiences, opportunities to problem solve, help and serve. To be frank, watching Netflix at home for the better part of a year (while accessing remote teaching) has not been satisfactory.

As students with so much potential yet such little opportunity to assist, we felt truly helpless during the pandemic. We are often referred to as the cream of the crop, the best and brightest in the Caribbean; the motto “to whom much is given much is expected” is all too familiar. The year 2020 in “normal” times would have marked the commencement of our clinical studies where we would have been learning

on the wards/clinics, and making a difference in some form or fashion in the care of patients. It goes without saying that what we expected of ourselves, is not the reality that we faced. As such, when the opportunity arose to participate in the island wide COVID-19 vaccination Blitz, we naturally rose to the occasion.

The Blitz unearthed our desire and abilities to help people in a face-to-face setting and provided a pause in the frustrations of this challenging academic year. Public health is far from glamorous, but the gratification of seeing the results at the end of the day was incredible. It was an experience that we were so proud to be a part of, that can only be described as

“extraordinary”. We worked alongside our Professors and doctors not as students and teachers, but as true colleagues. Together as one, we worked to achieve what was necessary; one common goal - *to vaccinate as many*

Jamaica citizens in the most efficient, equitable and orderly manner. It was a masterclass in medical collaboration and innovation.

Throughout the highs and lows of the COVID-19



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pandemic, the Caribbean region was subject to natural disasters and faced several cases of social and gender-based violence. Most recently, the volcanic eruption in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, showed us the persistent unpredictability of our lives. These tribulations acted synergistically on our pre-existing feelings of helplessness. However, through decisive action, we quickly realized that leadership in medicine is not all about reading a textbook for an exam but acting urgently in times when our communities need us most. As public servants, we must have a multifaceted skill set so we can advocate for the people in our region, both inside and outside the hospital.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to remind and call upon all medical students to act wherever and whenever you

are capable and able. With *over 8000 people vaccinated at our clinic (the Mona Ageing and Wellness Center) in just four days*, we were reminded of the difference we all can make when we choose to act. With each inoculated client [possibly a life saved], we were reminded that advocacy without action has little value. Be the leaders you are called to be and exceed the expectations of Caribbean trailblazers. All the critiques on social media mean nothing without active participation in change. Make your mark. The social accountability of medical students must not be limited to an online presence, but we should do everything in our power to uplift the people in our communities, face to face [with all Covid 19 health protocols observed, of course].



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Excellence in social responsibility and co-curricular activities

DOWESHA WILLIAMS

MBBS Class of 2024 FMS, The UWI, Mona, Jamaica



I am Dowesha Williams, a second-year student in the Faculty of Medical Sciences – MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) Programme. I hail from a community known as Race Course in Clarendon, Jamaica, and can be characterized as goal-oriented with a pleasant personality and a tenacity that knows no restrictions.

My passion for volunteering started whilst I was at the Race Course Primary School (former deputy head girl). My journey began with helping cousins and neighbours with homework and school projects. While at Glenmuir High School, I was actively involved with numerous clubs and societies [President of the Young Leaders Association, Academic Mentor, Basketball player, Dance Society member, Prefect, Secretary of Rangers, Red Cross Member, Speech & Drama member, Tourism Action Club, Vice President of the Sixth Form Association, ISCF member, Director of the Personnel Team for Key Club, 4H member, Homework Center

Volunteer]. My love for children evolved when we (YLA) adopted a basic school and participated in teaching and game activities. I began university (MBBS Programme) in 2019 spending half the year doing face-to-face classes until Covid-19 struck.

Fast forward to April 2021, I was at home doing an online examination when I heard children playing at approximately 10 o'clock on a Monday morning. After asking around, I learnt that they lacked access to the necessary resources such as tablets and internet connection for online school. I decided to conduct remedial classes for the children whilst providing free meals daily. These were funded by my parents. I have a firm conviction that education is the only way to escape the cancer of poverty and move up the echelons of society. My volunteerism extends beyond my community to the UWI. Last academic year I provided peer support

as a tutor for first-year medical students via The UWI Surgical Society. I am an advocate for Individual Social Responsibility (ISR).

What matters most is not the 'art of giving', but the 'science of being' in symbiotic relationship with our immediate surroundings, communities, society, and the world at large sustained through ethical behaviour, integrity, and unwavering generosity. Besides being driven by genuine, intrinsic altruism, I believe ISR adds to one's self-esteem. After all, our conduct defines what kind of person we are, not only in the eyes of others but also in our own eyes (Gurnani, 2018).

[The Gleaner Article here.](#)



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From Stopgap to Main Event

Expansion of The UWI Online Conference Services to Facilitate Student Education During COVID-19

DR KIM QUIMBY¹, HEATHER HAREWOOD², LEAH GARNER O'NEALE³, TAMESHIA BRANFORD², SAMUEL EUGENE⁴, BRIAN ELCOCK²

¹George Alleyne Chronic Disease Research Centre (GA-CDRC), Caribbean Institute for Health Research (CAIHR), UWI, Barbados. ²Faculty of Medical Sciences, UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados. ³Faculty of Science and Technology, UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados. ⁴Campus IT Services, UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados.

The University of the West Indies Online Conference Services (TUCS Online) was initially developed as a stopgap to allow the continuation of Continuing Medical Education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The service comprises an online registration and payment system facilitated by the Bursary and the Zoom Webinar platform supplied by the Information Technology (IT) department, both of the Cave Hill Campus. Entities external to The UWI who want to access these services

are offered such on a 'fee for service' payment model where they can choose from a suite of services including pre-event administrative services and post-event distribution of certificates.

As the pandemic wore on, the committee became aware that these technological advances can be used to impact educational needs beyond what we are currently offering and will allow us to extend our reach in a way that was not possible with the previous face-to-face model. Encouraged by the all-round UWI

response to the needs of the Caribbean people during the pandemic, we expanded TUCS Online to include TUCS Outreach which is an educational service to Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) students in the region. After consultation with Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) and other stakeholders, we decided to use Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Science in this pilot project.

The event poster, which included embedded links to the registration page, was


advertised via The UWI and the Student Enrolment and Retention Unit (SERU) Facebook pages and other social media sites, CXC email lists, school and personal WhatsApp chats and a television station in Trinidad and Tobago.

Over a 2-week period during the Easter Break, lecturers and students met on the Zoom webinar platform for 9 sessions in total; these included 5 Biology sessions covering Immunology, AIDS and Dengue Fever; 3 Chemistry sessions covering titrimetric analysis and gravimetric analysis and 1

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session of Environmental Science looking at Human population and the environment. Each session was scheduled for 1 hour. Sessions were very interactive and inclusive of varying online tools including the minute-paper, breakout groups, activities in Nearpod and a whiteboard space where students answered and critiqued each other's short answer questions (SAQs). Outcomes from this pilot were very encouraging. The highest daily attendance was 285 students. Approximately a third were from Barbados, a third from Trinidad and Tobago and the remainder from Jamaica, Guyana, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, Grenada and Belize. In Barbados there was representation from 8 secondary schools.

Although this was primarily an outreach exercise, there is scope for development into a mutually beneficial arrangement for The UWI and other regional stakeholders in education, including students. On registration, we asked a series of questions including their top 3 Universities of choice. On day 1, 70% of students chose The UWI; Cave Hill, Mona and St. Augustine were all represented among student choices. Feedback from students was positive and we have had further requests from CXC, parents, teachers and students asking for additional lectures in different subjects. In conclusion, online education has expanded our influence. This pilot project was successful and we should build on it to improve not only the number but potentially also the caliber of student that matriculates into The UWI.



FREE CAPE SCIENCE ONLINE REVISION SESSIONS

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.



Chemistry Unit 1 and 2 | Biology Unit 2 | Environmental Science Unit 1

SCHEDULE

Click corresponding dates and times to register for sessions

CAPE CHEMISTRY		Dr. Leah Garner- O'Neale		
	Module	Specific Objectives	Time	Proposed Date
Chemistry (U1)	1	3.9	11:30 – 12:30 p.m.	April 15 th
Chemistry (U2)	2	2.5 & 3.4	1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	April 15 th

CAPE BIOLOGY		Dr. Heather Harewood		
	Module	Specific Objectives	Time	Proposed Date
CAPE Biology (U2)	3	3.5 & 3.6	10:00-11:00 a.m.	April 14 th
CAPE Biology (U2)	3	3.7 & 3.8	11:30-12:30 p.m.	April 14 th

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE		Dr. Heather Harewood		
	Module	Specific Objectives	Time	Proposed Date
Environ. Science (U1)	2	11 - 13	10:00- 11:00 a.m.	April 16 th

CAPE BIOLOGY		Dr. Kim Quimby		
	Module	Specific Objectives	Time	Proposed Date
CAPE Biology (U2)	3	2.1 - 2.5	10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	April 13 th
CAPE Biology (U2)	3	2.6 - 2.10	1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	April 16 th

For Queries, Call: 4174047 or Email: tameshia.brathwaite@cavehill.uwi.edu

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PECH Practicum May 2021

DR FARID YOUSSEF

Snr Lecturer, Department of Preclinical Sciences, FMS,
The UWI, St. Augustine Campus

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” Martin Luther King Jr

As the COVID-19 pandemic has raged for the past 18 months one of the bright spots has been the level of professionalism, dedication and sacrifice displayed by our frontline workers and in particular our health professionals. Their efforts, quite literally in face of death, have shone a light on what makes medicine such a noble profession and why health professionals are held in such high esteem across the globe. However, attitudes towards health professionals are not all positive and rightfully so. Over the past two decades as social expectations have changed, technology evolved, and the costs of

healthcare increased some of our professionals have failed to live up to the high standards expected of them and their oaths of service. To quote one famous health economist, “sometimes it appears we are not training doctors but rather businessmen with a medical degree”.

It is within this context that the Faculty of Medical Sciences, UWI, St. Augustine embarked upon a mission a little over five years ago to more deliberately engage our future health professionals in consideration of these issues. This resulted in the introduction of a series of courses in Professionalism,

Ethics and Communication in Health now generally known as the PECH Program. A core component of the PECH program, the PECH Practicum, is a service-learning project in which students engage with their communities, experience the world through the eyes of others and confront and solve real world challenges. In all of this it is hoped that values such humility, altruism, and empathy are embedded in the hearts and minds of our future leaders.

Over the past five years students have serviced more than 200 hundred projects across Trinidad & Tobago. Projects are as diverse as the students themselves and have included Certified First Aid training to Cadets, partnering with Arrive Alive to bring awareness about road safety, refurbishing classrooms, school libraries, working with orphanages and retirement homes, to name a few. Importantly, students are expected to actively engage with their

communities such as one initiative that sought to assist a rural village with the eradication of mosquitoes. Students found themselves brush-cutting, collaborating with the residents to re-design their water storage containers and generally educating them on good environmental management. The unexpected bonus was the students became the recipients of ‘country generosity’ and never returned from one of the sessions without gifts of agricultural produce. Another project involved rehabilitating and redesigning a ‘sensory garden’ for the Autistic Society headquarters. The students had to acquire many skills they did not initially possess as they shaped and planted, painted and constructed. The practicum projects have taken the students out of their comfort zone and allowed them to discover fulfilment through giving back to society.

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As previously mentioned, that past 18 months has been challenging for all and required radical change to achieve the Practicum objectives. All projects had to be implemented virtually. It was amazing to observe the industry and efforts of staff and students alike to meet these challenges. All projects were successfully completed, receiving positive feedback from the different communities applauding the impact of the students and their endeavors. An example of one project was the establishment of a support system for parents to help them meet their children's educational needs as they sought to cope with "online school". At the end, this group partnered with an already established virtual homework centre to ensure the parents could receive continued assistance.

Whatever the project, tutors have regularly noted the students' accounts of personal growth and

learning as they interacted with their target groups. The benefit is always mutual for student and community. Below are testimonials from some of our students:

"The practicum offered me my first glimpse into problems that we face as a society, consequently offering me my first chance to help. The knowledge we shared has the potential to impact the lives of many across our nation."

"at the beginning I was a bit skeptical, especially since it was group work. But after having the experience I was actually grateful that it was group work because I learnt that each team member brings something unique to the table, and that the project was actually a success because of our differences".

"It is an uplifting experience to give back and everyone should make the effort to do so".

"Practicum was a course which was different from

the core courses that focused on academia this was a course that aided me in understanding community outreach a bit more. My group visited an elderly home which allowed me the opportunity to learn how to interact better with our elders and find creative ways to entertain them. Practicum thought me the importance of patience, groupwork and being a team player."

As a student, I appreciated the opportunity to "step-out" of the normal MBBS schedule to embark on a journey that was meant to have an impact on our targeted audience but ended up changing my life. Our project was one which focused on the holistic development of orphans and saw us attempt to have an impact on their lives, by making physical, social and emotional changes. Being involved in all stages of this Practicum as group leader, made me grow an appreciation for the simple things in life that I have but moreover, increased

my tolerance, patience and understanding; qualities which will be quintessential for effective physician-patient communication in a clinical setting.

"This practicum truly opened my eyes to the world around me, and I'm very grateful to have contributed towards something so beneficial and impactful."

"Initially, I felt skeptical about the practicum being conducted online. I wondered if the life lessons that my group sought to impart on the kids would be delivered effectively. As the sessions were conducted, however, I realized that carrying out this project online was fruitful in that it helped our target population, as well as allowed my group and I to gain some valuable skills"

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New Post Graduate Diploma in Paediatric Nursing at UWI, Cave Hill

DR WENDY SEALY

Lecturer in Nursing, FMS, The UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados



The Faculty of Medical Sciences, UWI, Cave Hill is set to launch the Post Graduate Diploma in Paediatric Nursing in September, 2021. The new PG Diploma in Paediatric Nursing was developed with support of the Shaw Centre for Paediatric Excellence

which is a partnership between The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto, Canada and the Government of Barbados. The goal of SCPE is to establish Barbados as a Centre for Paediatric Excellence in the Eastern Caribbean through a robust partnership and targeted investment in education for nurses and other health workers, quality improvement and research and advocacy.

Therefore, the aim of the Postgraduate Diploma in Paediatric Nursing is to prepare nurses with requisite knowledge, skills and competencies to improve health care

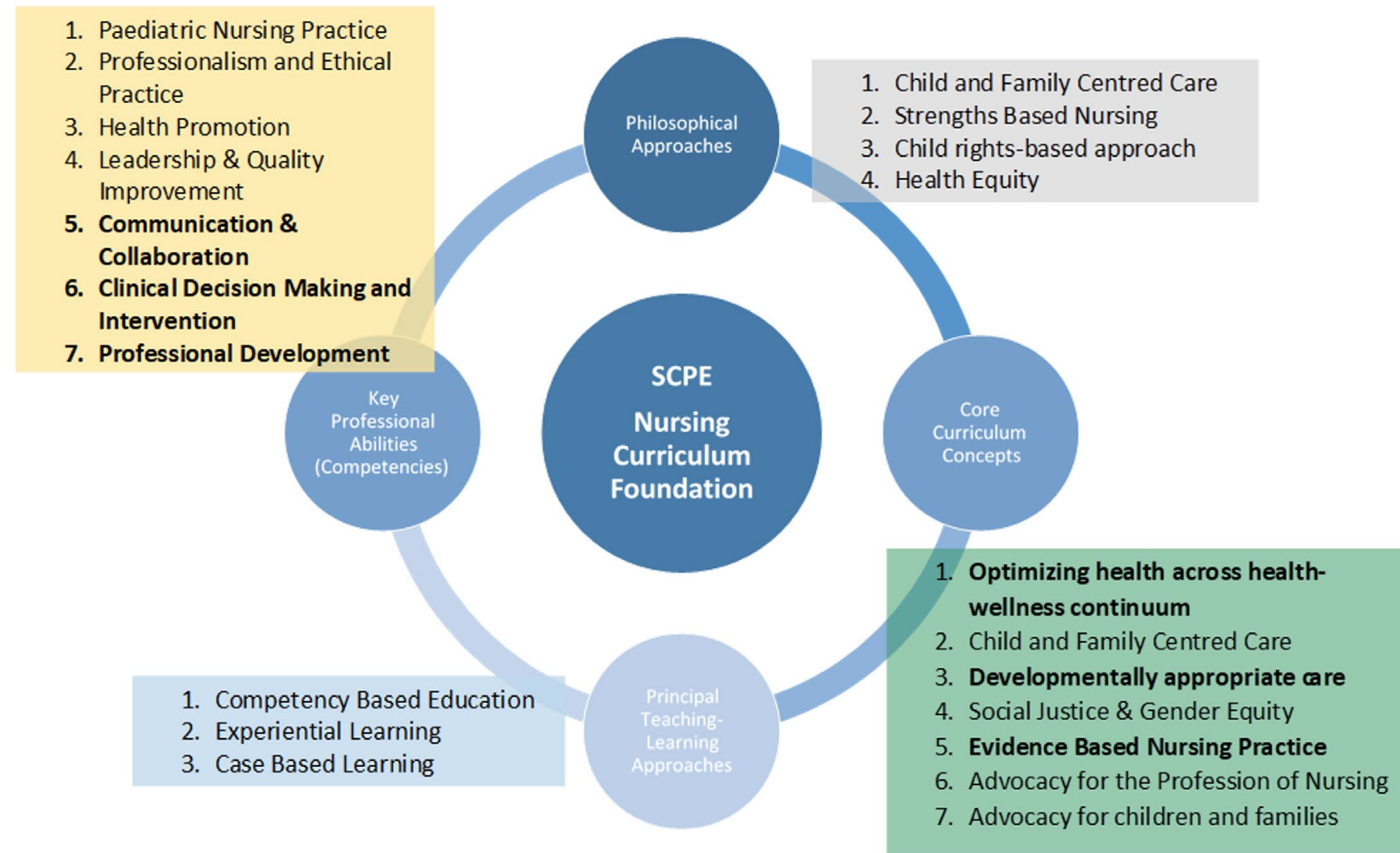
outcomes in children and provide optimal leadership for child health care service delivery and practice in Barbados. The curriculum is centered on paediatric nursing competencies relevant to nursing care both nationally and internationally.

Graduates of this program will apply the best current evidence of knowledge synthesized from critical analysis, and theoretical concepts to deliver safe and professional paediatric nursing care. They will also utilize critical thinking skills and professional judgement to inform decision-making to assess, plan, intervene and evaluate plans of

care for management of paediatric conditions.

To advance the discipline of paediatric nursing, graduates will advocate for children and their families and initiate evidence-based quality improvement activities based on priorities related to nursing practice and child health. The program will create leaders in paediatric nursing care who will lead based on sound clinical decision making and critical analysis of issues. They will strengthen their personal and professional values, attitudes and competencies through continuing education, self-reflection and life-long learning.

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SCPE Nursing Curriculum Foundation

A blended model of delivery will be used during this program, including face-to-face and online learning, where taught courses will be delivered through a mix of lecture and skills laboratory time. Additionally, lectures will consist of case-based learning, discussion, and in-class group work and activities. Skills laboratory time will consist of hand on learning and simulation and virtual simulation will augment in-person learning.

The practicum will take place in selected public and private agencies where students will apply course content while providing clinical care in hospital and community settings with support from staff and instructors.

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Yoga gets into FMS UWI Cave Hill to Deal with COVID-19 Anxiety

DR. KEERTI SINGH¹, DR MADHURI DOMA², DR. MD ANWARUL AZIM MAJUMDER¹

¹FMS, UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados

²Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), Barbados

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a number of stressors for students. Uncertainties concerning teaching, learning, and assessment generate stress and anxiety, and social distancing further contributes to loneliness. Allied health professional schools are seeking ways to alleviate stress and improve the quality of life amongst students. The effects of yoga have proven to be successful against stress. Like many other Universities, the Faculty of Medical Sciences at Cave Hill undertook several initiatives for the wellbeing of its students during the challenging times of the COVID-19

pandemic. The Yoga group at Cave Hill comprising of Drs Azim Majumder, Keerti Singh and Madhuri Doma initiated a collaborative communication with Dr Balachunder Subramaniam and his Yoga research team at the Sadhguru Center for a Conscious planet based in Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, Boston, MA, USA to introduce yoga and meditation sessions for the Year I MBBS students in view of the prevailing COVID-19 situation.

This endeavor is aimed to promote Health and Mental Wellbeing through the

practice of yoga. Online discussions were held with Dr Balachunder and his team, who are actively involved in research into the beneficial effects of yoga especially for the medical students. The team showed interest and agreed to collaborate to help our students with the practice of yoga tools in dealing with anxiety and stress. Similar programmes have been introduced in the Harvard and Rutgers University USA.

After approval from the faculty and with the support of Medical Students Association (MSA) and the Office of Students



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Services UWI Cave Hill, an introductory lecture was held by Dr Balachunder on Friday the 9th of October, Semester 1 Academic Year 2020/2021 on, “Introducing Yoga tools and health benefits through evidence-based research” for the students and faculty. This was followed by seven online yoga practice sessions every Friday from 3-4 pm through zoom. The sessions opened at 2:30 pm with soothing meditation music. IT support was provided by the Sadhguru Center for a Conscious planet. At 3 pm the sessions began with the welcoming and introduction of the instructor for the session who explained about the practices to the participants. This was followed by a video demonstration and the actual practice session. Students were given time to chat as well as ask queries to the instructor by unmuting their microphones. Practice videos were shared with students to continue their practices during the week.



Sadhguru Centre Team: Dr Sepideh Hariri, Dr Balachundhar Subramaniam and Ms Tulsi Mehta Chase.

The MSA took an active role in preparation of the flyers and the smooth running of the sessions. The sessions were well attended by students from the FMS, other UWI Cave Hill Faculties and staff. The participation in the sessions was voluntary. On the 20th of November another guest lecture was taken by Dr Tracy Chang from Rutgers University, USA who spoke on, “Management

of mental stress and anxiety amongst medical students.” In addition to these sessions, Dr Mike Campbell, Senior Lecturer, FMS and Psychologist (QEH), Barbados conducted a mental health check-in session which was organized on student’s request where he and Dr. Maisha Emanuel, Lecturer, FMS, and Consultant Psychiatrist (QEH), interacted and answered

queries related to stress and anxiety.

The students suggested that there should be repeat sessions in the future and these should be scheduled later in the day or early in the morning to allow more student participation. As per student’s request five Online Yoga sessions were organized in semester 2 between 26th February to 26th March, 3-4 pm EST via zoom. This time the sessions were open to all Cave Hill Students and staff. A new meditation practice called “Chit Shakti meditation” was introduced this time, which soon became the most popular Yoga practice during Semester 2. All sessions were well attended. This time the Yoga instructor for all sessions was Mrs. Srividya Radhakrishnan, a trained yoga instructor volunteering with the Sadhguru Center, who had previously visited UWI Cave Hill in January 2020. During her visit, she had

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conducted a weeklong face-to-face Hatha Yoga training workshop on “Surya Kriya” and “Angamardana” for staff of UWI Cave Hill and QEH at the Henry Fraser Lecture Theatre Foyer.

At the end of Semester 2 sessions, students expressed their continued interest in the Online Yoga Practice sessions and requested the sessions continue during the next academic year too. The overall idea is to make students feel refreshed and healthy by the practice of yoga and enable them to overcome mental stress and anxiety during these challenging times.

Useful links for yoga practices:

<https://isha.sadhguru.org/global/en/yoga-meditation/yoga-program-for-beginners/yoga-videos>

<https://isha.sadhguru.org/us/en/yoga-meditation/yoga-program-for-beginners/chit-shakthi-meditation>

<https://isha.sadhguru.org/us/en/yoga-meditation/yoga-program-for-beginners/isha-kriya-meditation>

UWI Cave Hill Yoga Team

Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS):

- Dr Keerti Singh
- Dr Azim Majumder
- Dr Madhuri Doma
- Mr Brian Elcock: IT Support

Medical Student Association (MSA):

- Ms Shanice Musgrave
- Ms Joette Fernander
- Mr Tyronne Perpall

Office of Students Services (OSS):

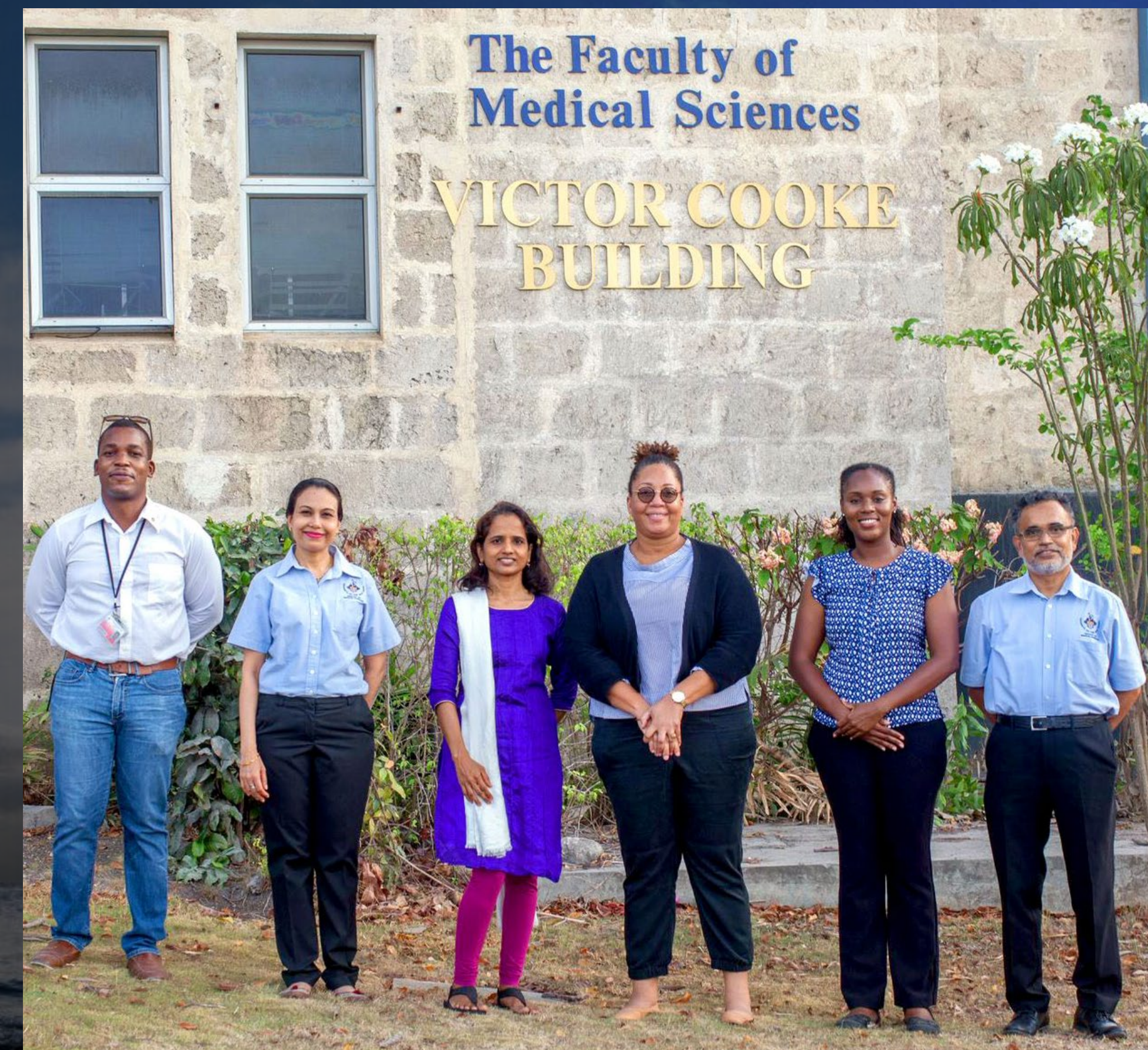
- Mrs Dale Lynch

Sadhguru Center for a Conscious Planet Team

- Dr. Balachunder Subramaniam
- Dr. Sepideh Hariri
- Ms Tulsi Chase

Acknowledgment

We are thankful to Dr Balachunder Subramaniam (Professor of Anaesthesia,



UWI Cave Hill Team: Mr Brian Elcock, Dr Keerti Singh, Dr Madhuri Doma, Ms Dale Lynch, Ms Shanice Musgrave and Dr Azim Majumder

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, MA, USA and Director of Sadhguru Center for a Conscious

Planet) and Dr Peter Adams (Dean, FMS, UWI) for their continued support and guidance in conducting the yoga sessions.

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Increasing the Visibility of Transgender People in Medical Teaching

DR MIKE CAMPBELL

Senior Lecturer in Behavioural Science/Psychology, FMS, Cave Hill, Barbados



Transgender patients are increasingly visible in medical settings in the Caribbean, and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has established guidelines for comprehensive care

of transgender people in the Caribbean and Latin America (1). Transgender-responsive practice extends beyond the specifics of transgender medicine and requires, in all specialties, both sensitivity and technical competence to best serve patients and families. However, persistent gaps in transgender medical curriculum present barriers to care for transgender people globally (2,3).

Actions to develop transgender curriculum at Cave Hill include, from 2020, collaboration with Butterfly Barbados, a community-based transgender advocacy group, to incorporate

the voices transgender people in the Psychiatry & Medical Humanities Clerkship, which now incorporates an interactive teaching session with Ms. Raven Gill, the founder of Butterfly. Sessions allow students to deepen their awareness of the experience of transgender people in healthcare settings, as well as in the context of stigma and discrimination in everyday life. The discussions have been both thoughtful and practical, and feedback from students has been consistently positive.

Research efforts by our transdisciplinary team with expertise in psychology (Dr.

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Mike Campbell), psychiatry (Dr. Maisha Emmanuel), internal medicine (Dr. Arianne Harvey), public health (Dr. Natalie Greaves and Dr. Heather Harewood), social work (Dr. Jill Gromer-Thomas), and medical education (Dr. Azim Majumder) are building an evidence base for further curriculum development. An initial survey of FMS undergraduates (4) identified a number of common beliefs reflecting stigma and bias but strong endorsement of the dignity and value of transgender people. We presented findings at the most recent International Association of Education in Ethics Meetings in Portugal and have submitted the manuscript for publication. A complementary study exploring the knowledge, attitudes, and opinions of FMS curriculum leaders through focus groups is currently underway. Collectively, we hope

the findings will inform the effective inclusion of transgender at appropriate points in the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, as well as in future CME offerings.

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Making It Count

21 Days of Motivation for Caribbean Students

MS. SHANICE MUSGRAVE

President, Medical Students' Association & Medical Sciences Representative, Guild of Students 2020-2022, UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados



Making It Count: 21 Days of Motivation for Caribbean Students is written by first-time author Shanice "Worldchanger" Musgrave, the Medical Students' Association (MSA) president at the Cave Hill campus. In this book, Shanice shares her nonconventional journey to medical school through the

autobiographical narrative of her life from primary school to sixth form. Her journey was indeed not laden with accolades but one that broke the barriers of every struggle that she has encountered on her academic roller-coaster. Over the 21 days, she challenged the ideologies that mainstream schooling projected, which often caused her to think that there were few options to her career path.

Shanice was that student who passed for her last choice secondary school after completing the Secondary Entrance Assessment, earlier known as the Common Entrance Exam in Trinidad and Tobago. She was that

student who did not achieve all grade ones on her CXC CSEC or CAPE subjects, making her uncompetitive for her desired field of study. These outcomes caused her to believe that she would never have the chance to study medicine.

Obstacles turn into opportunities; feeling left behind after sixth form while many of her friends went off to university allowed Shanice the opportunities to discover her true potential. She was a fighter from the beginning as she struggled with spelling in primary school, moles and the study of carbon compounds in chemistry, to name a few. Every time she overcame, there was always another "Goliath" to conquer.

This book is Shanice's first official contribution to the empowerment and liberation of Caribbean students as they work towards their future endeavours. Each day is enriched with recollections of her journey, targeted nuggets of wisdom and

reflective exercises. She hopes to shake the foundation of every student, no matter their age or intended area of study. Most of all, she aspires to give her readers perspective concerning their unique pathway thus far and shift mindsets to the self-development of their learning experience.

If one can move a mountain to create hope for others, then do it like a duty. To every student: empowerment is the key to perseverance.



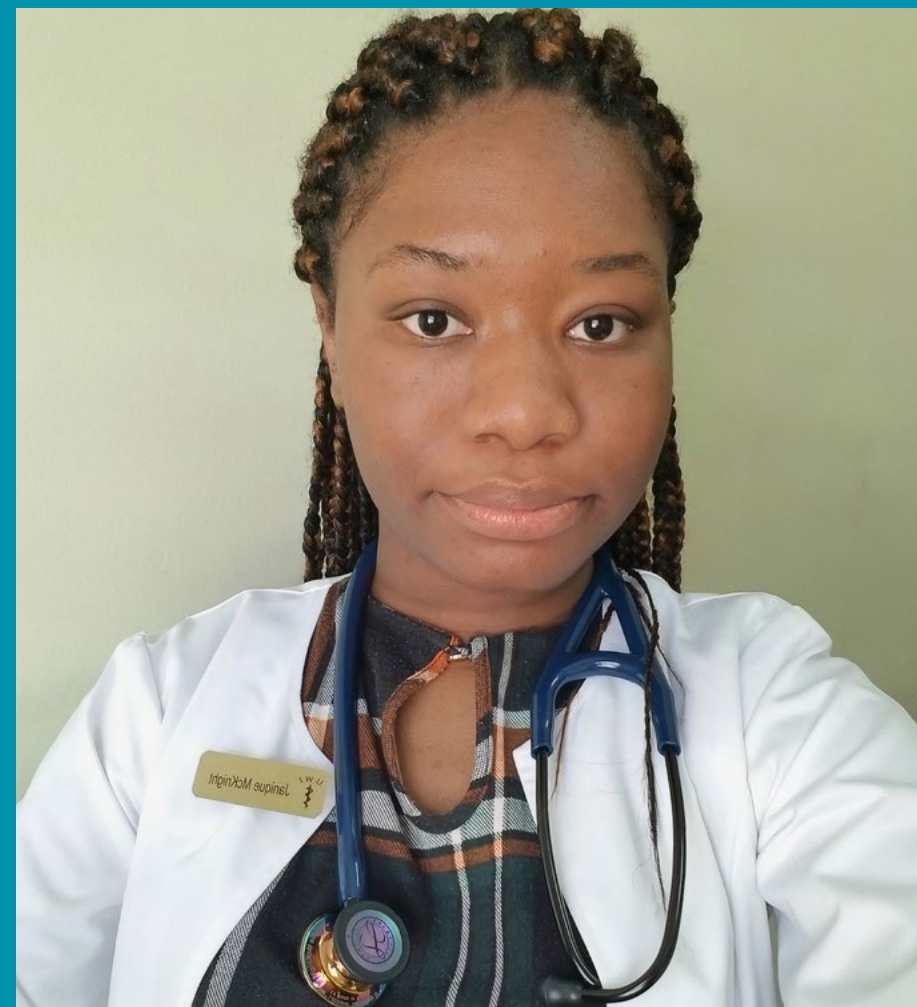
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A Short Story

Winner of the PSCCA Creative Writing Competition

JANIQUE MCKNIGHT

MBBS Class of 2023, FMS, The UWI, Mona, Jamaica



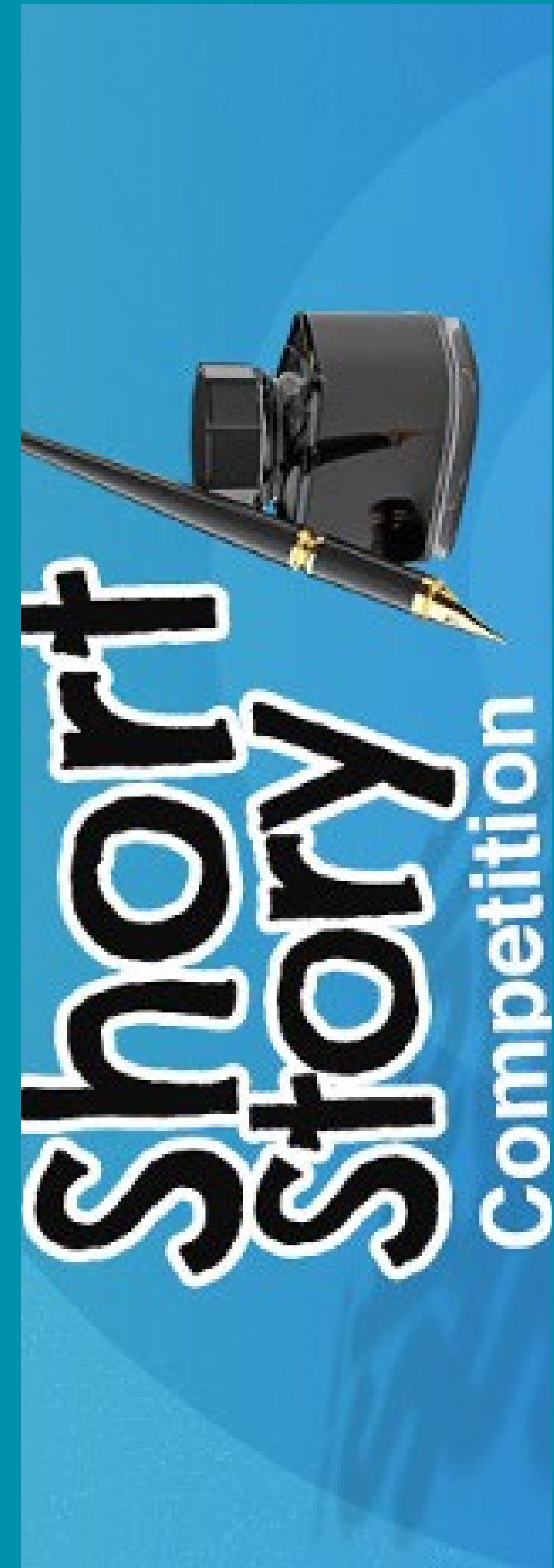
Living constitutes enriching ourselves with a positive purpose and utilizing our talents to enhance life for ourselves and others. This has guided me to pursue a career in medicine. The benefits to both the patient and the practitioner are quite

conspicuous. Often though, medical professionals tend to neglect other important aspects of their lives, and the lion's share of their time and energy is spent on medicine. Owing to this realization, many practitioners have sought to enrich their life, and in some instances, the lives of others, by pursuing other talents and hobbies.

In high school I struggled to find extra-curricular activities that I enjoyed. I remember on my 13th birthday, my mother had given me a book from the Nancy Drew series as a present. Despite not knowing what else I would have wanted, I was very upset, because certainly

I did not want to read any more than I already had to for school. Then, somewhere between my crying and complaining she had convinced me to read it. I was absolutely enamored. I wanted her to buy all the Nancy Drew books she could find. As I began to read books that were more perspicacious and impassioned, enriched with metaphors and enigmas, I found myself wanting to write as well. Whether it was stories, poetry or prose I had immersed myself in writing using it as an outlet for various thoughts, emotions and interests.

I saw the Phillip Sherlock Centre for Creative Arts Short Story Competition



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poster on Instagram in November 2020, but was hesitant to enter. After all, this competition was open to all the brilliant minds attending the University of the West Indies. Nevertheless, I persevered. I was especially grateful for the flexibility of the competition. I was able to write whatever I was inspired to write about, as long as there was a Jamaican theme. With classes being online, due to the pandemic, there was ample time to formulate the perfect story. I wanted to write a story with depth. The first draft was almost nothing like the current story. I was editing the story daily for about three weeks, adding and subtracting ideas that emerged while I was watching movies, scrolling on my phone or even in the shower. Many details of the story were inspired by actual events from the lives of people around me, twisted to add to the drama. When

I was pleased with the final product, I submitted my story and awaited the results.

The excitement I experienced when I received the call that I had won first place was rivaled only by the news of being accepted into medical school. I was particularly thrilled about my story being uploaded as a podcast¹, as my intentions were not only to win, but also to spread awareness about the various issues highlighted in my story and encourage a divergent and genuine thought process. It is truly exhilarating to be recognized and appreciated for my talents outside of medicine.

¹The podcast is part of the Brian Heap Creative writing podcast series on YouTube available at: <https://youtu.be/oiXi30iZ-CM>

The Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts,
The University of the West Indies, Mona
PRESENTS

THE PSCCA

Short Story Competition

WINNERS

1st Place - Janique McKnight - Short Story entitled Blighia Sapida
3rd Year Student - Faculty of Medical Sciences - Major: MBBS

2nd Place - Renardo Lewis - Short Story entitled Rite of Passage
2nd Year Student - Faculty of Humanities and Education - Major: Music and Performance Studies

3rd Place - Delano Frankson - Short Story entitled The Dread on Lester Street
1st Year Student - Faculty of Humanities and Education - Major: Journalism.

Congratulations

HIGH COMMENDATIONS

Nakeeba Bowes - Short Story entitled Summer Haze
1st year Student - Faculty of Science and Technology Major: Computer Science

Amani Uswale-Nketla - Short Story entitled Barry's Adventure: A true story
2nd Year Student - Faculty of Social Sciences - Major: Tourism Management

Britney Samuels - Short Story entitled A Fallen Island
2nd Year Student - Faculty of Social Sciences - Major: Human Resource Management

Gregory Bryce - Short Story entitled Songbird
2nd Year Student - Faculty of Humanities and Education - Major: Journalism

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Prioritizing Fitness for Purpose in Health Professions Education

TOMLIN J. PAUL

FMS, The UWI, Mona, Jamaica

Introduction – understanding quality

There are many guiding principles as to how we approach the education of health professionals. Among these, quality often comes to the surface as a broad umbrella under which a host of principles, guidelines and standards fall. Harvey and Green (1993) speaks of five broad concepts of quality: (1) exceptional quality; (2) consistency – zero deficits; (3) fitness for purpose; (4) value for money and (5) transformation. The University of the West Indies is guided by five interrelated dimensions of quality among which are: (i)

fitness of purpose; (ii) fitness for purpose; (iii) value for money; (iv) transformative development of students and staff; and (v) adherence to high standards, including internal and external customer service standards (The University of the West Indies' Quality Policy, 2017).

The framework for external quality assurance in medical education presented by the Caribbean Authority of Medical Education and other Health Professionals (CAAM-HP) presents 117 explicit standards across different domains (Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions, 2017).

Yet, it seems like our discussions on quality in medical education often track back to factors to do with clinical skills and clinical competence and putting us at risk of falling for an “exceptional quality” paradigm. Indeed health professions training can often be biased towards physician training with a pre-occupation of producing “high quality physicians”. As worthy as this is as a goal for medical educators, the expression “high quality physicians” if not probed for meaning, can be a barrier to the pursuit of a more considered and balanced model with greater cost-utility and social value. If, however, we examine the operational frames for quality highlighted above, and make an effort to go beyond adherence to high standards, we will see “fitness for purpose” as one of the agreed points that is worthy for consideration.

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Fitness for purpose and fitness of purpose

In fitness for purpose, quality is seen as having meaning in relation to the purpose of the product or service, in our context a trained health professional. If the “product” does the job for which it is designed, then such can be held up as a quality product or service. Quality here is not driven by the notion of exceptionality but is a more inclusive concept where every product has the potential to fit its purpose and thus be a quality product or service. So we should also be looking at producing a class of health professionals who are fit for purpose as we contemplate the movement pursuing the notion of graduates with exceptional clinical skills as the mark of quality.

Fitness for purpose however does raise the question of “whose purpose?” This perspective is important and can be seen as that of the institution, guided by

its mission. Purpose can also be defined through the consumer’s point of view and even then, there is argument as to whether consumer means student or the person eventually using the service of the graduate. Getting a grasp of purpose will take us into another quality domain of “fitness of purpose”. This deliberation will provide important answers to how our curriculum is framed and contextualized in its delivery. So in summary we should be crafting our purpose, examining its relevance and looking at how well we are training for that purpose.

If our health professionals are being trained to serve and apply the competencies gained in their training, then the reflection on purpose from the customer point of view will bring a deeper interrogation of who is the customer with issues of access and reach emerging. In 2021 our societies including those of the Caribbean region have

become more explicitly multicultural. Race is only one dimension among a plethora of characteristics that forces us to think more meaningfully about our customer. Gender, economic status and sexual orientation have all become important in understanding the social determinants of health and how we should approach delivery of care both in the clinical and community or social setting.

Curriculum interrogation at Mona

If we are training health care professionals to be more than good clinicians then the curriculum must pay attention to the diversity that exists among our customers. In the Faculty of Medical Sciences at the Mona Campus, we have started to interrogate our curriculum and expand our vision of fitness for purpose. In partnership with the United Nations Population Fund through the European Union Spotlight Initiative we are looking at how the

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curriculum can be improved to address issues pertaining to Violence Against Women and Girls. At the same time through partnership with the The Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG) we are looking at the extent to which curricula across our health professional training areas are addressing the health care needs of persons in the LGBT community. These efforts while sensitizing staff and students to a widened framework for appreciating curriculum content are consistent with the pursuit of CAAM-HPs standards such as in:

ED-23: "The curriculum must prepare students for their role in addressing the medical consequences of common societal problems." And

ED-24: "The faculty and students must demonstrate an understanding of the manner in which people of diverse cultures and belief systems perceive health and illness and respond to

various symptoms, diseases, and treatments."

We also have an active Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee working to build consciousness in relevant areas and promote a harmonious culture.

Taking purposeful action

Yet we should not wait for accreditation bodies to define our purpose. We have what it takes to look critically at our engagement and re-orient our approaches as needed. If, as in The UWI Quality Framework, transformation is seen as a tenet, then we must add quality improvement to quality assurance and go aggressively and strategically after critical elements of meaningful change. Sandhu et al. (2020) notes that "the onus is on medical education institutions to train students to serve vulnerable communities to improve both health care access

and the quality of medical school education." Health disparities and issues of equity and diversity must now become core curriculum elements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought us face-to-face with how we might better apply information technology in delivering education to our health professionals. At the same time it has illuminated the nature of the environment within which we serve our customers. As we rush to make the technology adjustments we must also quickly pivot in looking at our curricula to see how we can make a difference on issues of health disparities, inequity and social justice. While we continue to press for exceptionality in areas such as clinical skills, we must strive to produce graduating classes that are fit for purpose in 2021 and beyond. That's an expanding agenda for our curriculum review and continuing quality improvement efforts!

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Excellence in Scholarly Achievement at FMS Mona

PROFESSOR RUSSELL PIERRE

Professor of Paediatrics, Director of Health Professions Education Unit, FMS, The UWI, Mona, Jamiaca



On February 3, 2021 five academics from Faculty of Medical Sciences, Mona were promoted to Professors at the University of the West Indies (Five Scientists Appointed Newest Professors at The UWI Mona Campus | Marketing and Communications Office, The University of West Indies at Mona, 2021).

This outstanding achievement was bestowed on Professor Trevor Ferguson (epidemiologist), Professor Maxine Gossell-Williams (pharmacologist), Professor Chukwuemeka Nwokocha (physiologist), Professor Daniel Oshi (public health specialist) and Professor Audrey Pottinger (clinical

psychologist), following rigorous evaluation of their records of teaching, research, public service and other professional activities.

Prof. Trevor Ferguson

An external assessor commented on Professor Ferguson's body of work as follows "In addition to his

record of distinguished, original scholarly output, Dr Ferguson's CV demonstrates an impressive funding history, an outstanding track record of mentoring at all levels, and an energetic contribution to The UWI and the Faculty of Medical Sciences' larger mission. He is quite obviously a team player with a sense of

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community responsibility and involvement.”

Professor Maxine Gossell-Williams

An external assessor opined following review of her work, “A wide range of research areas have been covered in her work. However, the underlying theme is based around pharmacovigilance. This is an important area and often ignored in all parts of the world. Therefore, Dr Gossell-Williams should be congratulated on picking an important area which can be of public health importance.”

Professor Chukwuemeka Nwokocha

Summarized comments from his external assessors included, “Dr Nwokocha’s research output is distinguished especially in the field of heavy metal Toxicity as evidenced by his publication and citation track record. These attributes underscore the strong impact of his research in toxicology.”

Professor Daniel Oshi

One external assessor commented following evaluation of his work, “It is quite evident that Dr Oshi has an excellent understanding and grasp on issues that challenge public health imagination

of academics and practitioners alike, and he has certainly lived up to and meaningfully contributed in shaping solutions. I have no hesitation in considering Dr Oshi’s contributions and its impacts as distinguished.”

Professor Audrey Pottinger

Evaluation of her body of work portrayed the following comment by an external assessor, “Dr Pottinger has had a long and distinguished record of publications in quality journals relevant to the focus of her studies. In considering the evolution of her area of interest including the consequences of infertility, separation from parents, violence and trauma,

she has engaged with a number of counselling, psychological and medical colleagues. I believe this speaks to the credibility and respect she has gained across these disciplines, and has facilitated her work having a broad scholarly, professional, and community impact.”

Reference

Five scientists appointed newest professors at The UWI Mona Campus | Marketing and Communications Office, The University of West Indies at Mona. (2021, April 20). www.mona.uwi.edu/marcom/newsroom/entry/8139

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Reflections: My Year at the New England Journal of Medicine

KRISTA M. NOTTAGE, BA, MBBS

Registrar, General Surgery, The UWI, Mona-Bahamas

In July of 2019 on taking a break from my DM surgery programme, I traveled to Boston, Massachusetts to pursue a prestigious fellowship at the New England Journal of Medicine. Having completed the DM Surgery Part I, and now in third year, I was in charge of our Journal Club. My interest in the mechanics of journal articles and what makes research great was piqued. I saw an advertisement for the fellowship and thought it was a long shot, but I'd take a chance. They took a chance on me, and I was elated to be accepted.

I was joined by two other fellows – a pulmonology fellow from the University

of Toronto in Canada and a paediatric resident from Imperial College London in the UK. We three were excited and energized for our new adventure. The Journal's offices - perched atop the Harvard Medical Library - provide a bird's eye view of the Longwood Medical Area. Central, and flanked by the famous Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Joslin Diabetes Center, Beth Israel, Brigham and Women's and Boston Children's Hospitals- it felt like we were at the beating heart of it all.

Dr. L. Connor (1884), as President of the American Association of Medical Editors, proposed the journal of the future would

be part medical school, part residency program, a clinical preceptor, and a set of textbooks. The Journal offers this and more. Now over 200 years old, it is the longest continuously published general medical journal. Widely read, cited, and highly influential, the Journal churns out weekly publications with a readership of 600,000 + medical professionals across the world. As an editorial fellow, we sat to understudy the process - a line by line, fine toothed combing of material that passed under multiple eyes, multiple revisions, and an extensive peer review from the best in the field. During my year I saw research change practice and law



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with vaping-related lung injury leading to e-cigarette bans, and stood witness to the emergence of a novel virus which we now know as COVID-19.

As fellows we assisted with the development of visual and interactive content in the form of visual abstracts, quick take videos, clinical images, content and activities for the resident website, and the development of a COVID-19 treatment simulator game. One of my favorite sections to read remains the Perspectives section – a commentary of medicine and society and the complexity therein.

Reading the research coming in to the Journal, I realized I'd seen similar pathology in my training between University Hospital Mona and the Princess Margaret Hospital in Nassau. We have so much to offer from our region and

U.W.I. community. They've called us the "Europe, Africa, India, and Asia" of the West. We are a true melting pot, indeed the original creole. A unique, powerhouse region with a wealth of experience to offer. What we write is what we want the world to know about us. I look forward to being one bolt in our machine that strives ever forward.



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Advancing Cervical Cancer Screening

An Update in the Bahamas

DR. RALEIGH BUTLER MBBS, FRCOG
Associate Lecturer, Gynecologist



In February 2021 the World Health Organisation (WHO), developed a comprehensive global strategy to eliminate cervical cancer which was adopted globally. There was a unanimously agreed resolution urging all WHO Member States (The Bahamas is a member) and all countries in the world

– to implement nationally the WHO blueprint of the global cervical cancer strategy and to achieve nationally the following three related targets (WHA 73.2) for Governments to commit that by the year 2030:

- 90% of girls are to be fully vaccinated by the age of 15
- 70% of women are screened twice by the age of 45
- 90% of women diagnosed with cervical disease have access to high quality treatment and symptom management.

This strategy applies to all countries in the world, however, women living in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) will benefit most. Ninety percent (90%) of the burden

of cervical cancer occurs in the LMICs and it is within them that the biggest gaps to access of care exist.

Cytology-based cervical cancer screening has been widely used for cancer control and has led to a significant reduction in the incidences of cervical cancer since the 1940's. In spite of these effective screening tools, globally more than 500,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer annually, and 300,000 women die from it. Screening for human papillomavirus (HPV), (the main cause of cervical cancer), was introduced in the 1990s and has become an effective screening tool internationally. Evidence from randomized controlled



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trials (RCTs) suggests that screening with high-risk HPV(hrHPV) is more sensitive than cytological screening methods regarding the detection of cervical precancerous lesions

Can we achieve these laudable goals with a cost-effective sustainable budget in The Bahamas?

The National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) in the Bahamas has recently implemented an

electronic health records system within which all women in the country will be registered. This would afford an efficient tracking of pap smear results, enabling us to call and recall patients; ensure quality assurance; provide mathematical modeling; determine prevalence and incidence; and follow scientific approaches in establishing cost effective management of our patients. In addition, self-administered HPV pap smears done at home using

directly delivered kits (highly advantageous in an archipelagic nation) would be returned to a centralized lab where specimens would be processed, analyzed and reported. Staff would flag and treat those patients with abnormal results. Staffing could be maintained with trained volunteers. These would improve access to care in remote areas.

Patients with abnormal results are to be managed as indicated, as part of standardized evidence-based treatment protocols. Utilizing new portable treatment methods, simple treatment can be rendered within the community with only complex treatment requiring the patients to access treatment at the two major hospitals in Nassau or Grand Bahama.

We are fighting to provide a good quality of life for the women of our nation. This work will reduce pain, suffering and premature deaths and ultimately uplift The Bahamas as a whole.



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School of Veterinary Medicine's Undergraduate Students' Research Day 2021

DR. SHARIANNE SUEPAUL

Lecturer, Veterinary Bacteriology

DR. KARLA GEORGES, L

Director, School of Veterinary Medicine

On Thursday 25th of February, 2021, the School of Veterinary Medicine hosted its annual Undergraduate Students' Research Day, virtually via Zoom. There were more than 100 persons in attendance including the Dean of Faculty of Medical Sciences - Professor Terence Seemungal and Emeritus Prof Carlton Gyles, Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph, Ontario Canada.

The judges were Dr. Siobhan Bridglalsingh (Lecturer, Veterinary Surgery), Dr. Muhammad Sani Ismaila (Lecturer, Veterinary Pharmacology) and Dr. Ganesh Thotta Narasimhalu (Senior



Lecturer and Head of Department, Clinical Veterinary Sciences).

Twelve groups presented on very contemporary

and impactful topics ranging across a variety of disciplines attesting to the broad and diverse nature of the veterinary profession. The winners most certainly

were the students who persevered with steadfast enthusiasm to produce such robust research in the face of the restrictions in place throughout most of 2020.

The best presentation was awarded to: A preliminary investigation of the distribution of the AB blood types in domestic cats in Trinidad, and the potential risks of transfusion reactions and neonatal isoerythrolysis.

Students: Monique Kellman, Sadiyah Ramatally, Kristen Jaggernath, Nadia Baksh, Sasha Bates. Supervisors: Dr. Indira Pargass, Drs. A. Hosein, Dr. A. Bally, Dr. S. Thomas.

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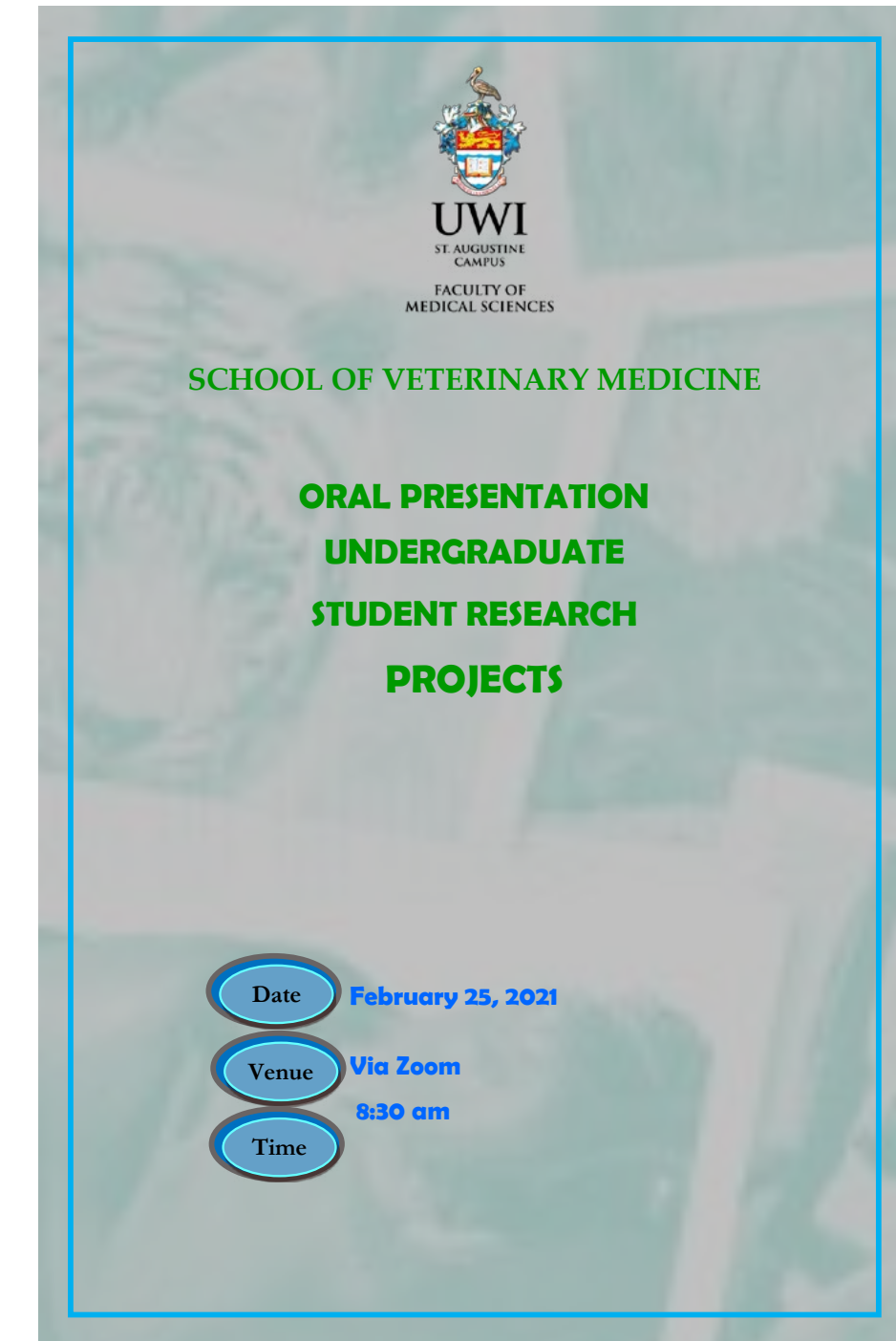
2nd place: *Toxicological evaluation of Bois Bande (*Parinari campestris* aubl.1772) stem bark extract in rats.*

Students: Esther Daniel, Chernell John, Danesha Ramdhanie and Shiann Lallack. Supervisors: Drs. V. Sundaram and Dr. J. Johnson.



3rd place: *Knowledge, attitude and perception of antimicrobial use amongst pig farmers in Trinidad and Tobago.*

Students: Christian -Lee Ali, Josh Calliste, Shenice Nyack, Samantha Rajkumar. Supervisors: Dr. A. Persad and Dr. S. Suepaul.



Click [[here](#)] to view abstracts for all twelve of the research projects presented by the students.

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Ms. Wendy Maynard and team from Marketing and Communications

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 - STA Campus Activities Jan-June 2021

World Health Day 2021

DR. RAJIV DAHIYA

Director, School of Pharmacy, FMS, The UWI, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago



April 7 of each year marks the celebration of World Health Day. From its inception at the First Health Assembly in 1948 and since taking effect in 1950, the celebration is marked by activities which extend beyond the day itself and serves as an opportunity to focus worldwide attention on important aspects of global health.

This celebration is aimed to create awareness of a specific health theme to highlight a priority area

of concern for the World Health Organization. The WHO organizes international, regional and local events on the Day related to a particular theme. World Health Day is acknowledged by various governments and non-governmental organizations with interests in public health issues, who also organize activities and highlight their support in the Global Health Council.

The School of Pharmacy commemorated this

important day by hosting a webinar entitled "Covid 19 pandemic - Impact on the pharmacy profession". The webinar was held on April 14, 2021 and was facilitated by Professor Mohammed Baidi Bin Bahari, Former Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, AIMST University, Bedong, Kedah, Malaysia. Prof. Bahari's areas of research are Public Health Pharmacy, especially in the area of public education, pediatric care, management of non-infectious chronic diseases and parenteral nutrition. Professor Bahari described the details of Covid-19 variants and focused the geographical distribution of cases. He discussed the role of the Pharmacist as it varied across the globe, depending on the impact of the pandemic.

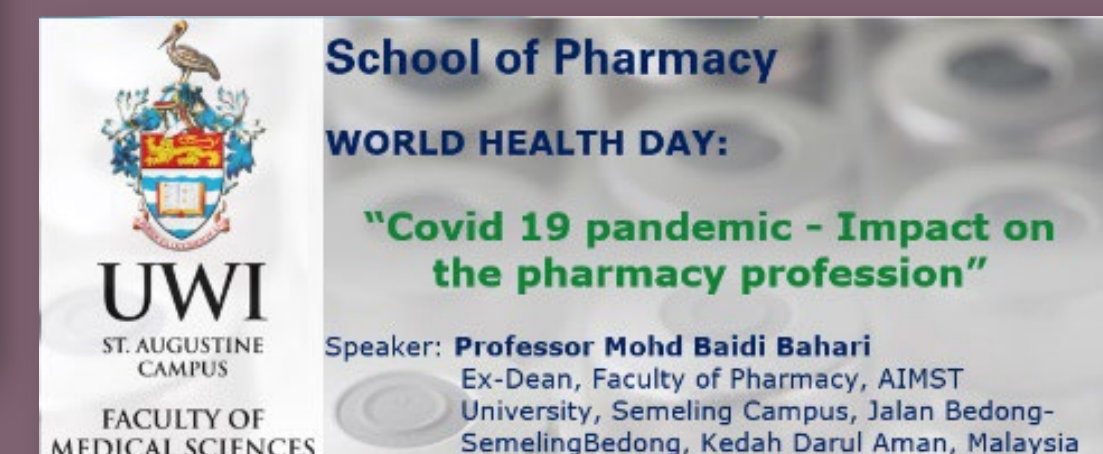
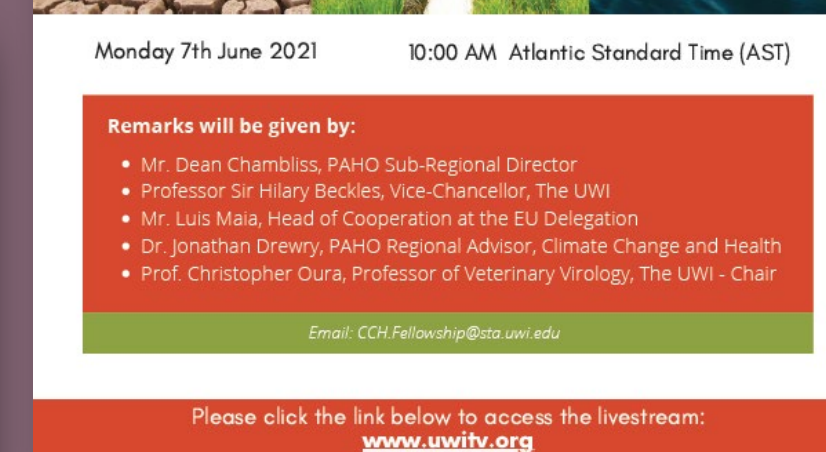
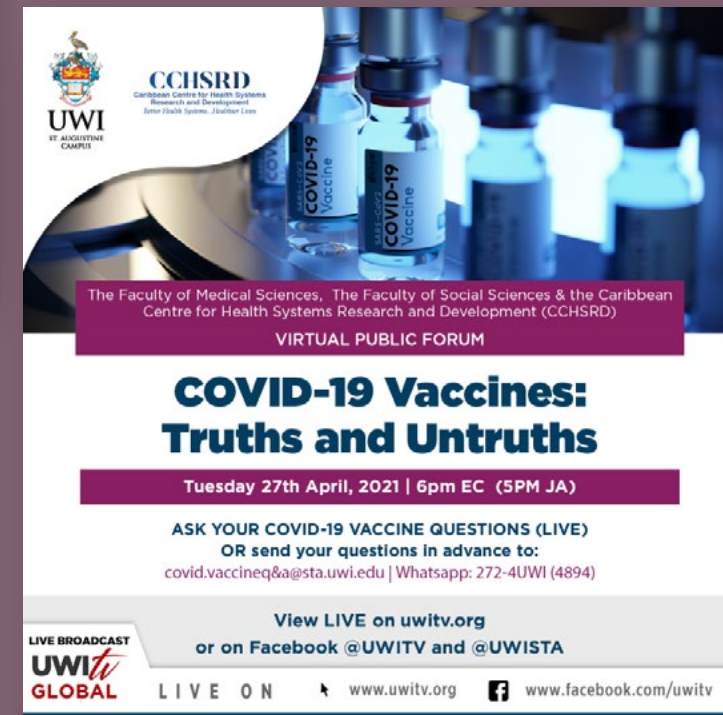
Let's build a fairer,
healthier world for
everyone



Prof. Mohammed Baidi Bin Bahari

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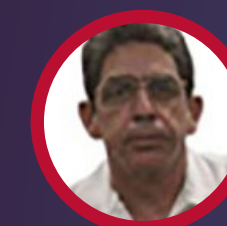
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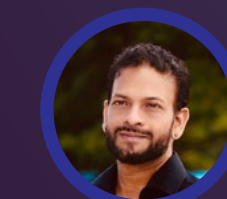
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