DEPUTY DEAN'S MESSAGE

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It is a pleasure to address our community on the occasion of the 32nd Annual Research Conference and to congratulate the Faculty of Medical Sciences on its achievements in research. Across our departments, our Researchers, Supervisors, Research Liaison Officers, Administrators and students have worked with dedication and a shared belief that research is central to our mission of improving health in Jamaica, the Caribbean, and beyond. The Faculty's growing body of scholarship reflects the commitment of every department and every person who has contributed to it.

These achievements rest on a strong foundation of capacity building. Through the Clinical Translational Research Unit (CTRU), we are working to equip scientists and health professionals with the skills that modern research demands. Our workshops, seminars, and training in research tools, together with support for grant writing and publication, are helping undergraduate and postgraduate students and faculty at every career stage, to produce research of the highest quality. Our expanding research repository and our partnerships with departments across the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, external partners and collaborators, as well as our student associations, are strengthening a culture of collaboration across the Faculty.

Today marks a milestone: we launch the first set of awards from the Faculty's pioneering Research Support Fund, which will support the work of our junior faculty and postgraduate students. We look forward to their sharing the findings of their research, which will help us lay a new landscape for action research and policy-shaping outcomes. This fund will continue to support early-mid and late-career researchers and research students.

We also welcome the re-introduction of a key partner in research, our very own West Indian Medical Journal (WIMJ). A strong journal of our own gives our researchers a trusted home for their findings and a direct route to the regional and international audiences who can put them to use.

Looking ahead to 2026–27, our direction is guided by the UWI Triple A Strategy: Access, Alignment, and Agility.

- **Access:** We will widen opportunities for research training and development, so that more leaders and students can contribute to research of greater quantity and quality.
- **Alignment:** We will keep pace with global standards for research and innovation and pursue grant funding that sustains our work.
- **Agility:** We will respond to a changing research landscape by building new partnerships, identifying new resources, and strengthening our collaborations locally, regionally and globally.

Several initiatives will carry this agenda forward. The FMS Annual Research Conference and our research showcase will increase the visibility of our work. We will build stronger links with our government ministries and agencies, as well as with non-governmental organizations, so that we can expand our influence on practice and policy and strengthen our research legacy. We will develop Faculty-wide research databases and a monitoring and evaluation framework to track our outputs and outcomes. We will also invest in infrastructure and in research risk assessment and management, so that our work is conducted safely and responsibly.

We sincerely thank our sponsors, contributors, collaborators, institutional leaders, members of faculty, and students who continue to support the growth and development of the Faculty of Medical Sciences. To all of you, congratulations on what you have achieved. I invite you to continue to engage and to help shape the next chapter of research in the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Mona.