

## DEAN'S MESSAGE

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The Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS) Annual Research Conference and Workshop (ARC) is in its 26<sup>th</sup> year, and we take great pleasure in welcoming our external and internal partners to partake in the wealth of information that will be on display. In keeping with the ARC's drive to remain relevant, our theme this year is **Cannabis and Cannabinoids: Research, Opportunities and Challenges**. The aim is to review research potential in the field of cannabis with a view to making the best use of the opportunities available to us in the face of auspicious competitors at the international level. However, we are not daunted, and we are delighted to have Professor Marilyn Huestis from Maryland, United States of America, President of Huestis & Smith Toxicology LLC, to explore with us how the FMS can actively compete in the international arena.

The FMS is by no means behind in research pertaining to cannabis, as we currently have a greenhouse dedicated to research in this area. Stalwarts within the FMS have had a footing in this area of research for some time, namely Professor Wayne McLaughlin and Professor Wendel Abel, and who can forget the first legal planting of marijuana on the Mona Campus on April 20, 2015. It was the symbol of the launch of research in the area at the Mona Campus.

During the three days that the ARC will span, we will explore the wider implication for the Caribbean. The younger generation of scientists, researchers and academics who we aim to motivate and involve through this yearly conference will also have a chance to display their work as well as learn from our presenters. This global society is advancing, and the Caribbean needs to keep up. The Cannabis Licensing Authority in Jamaica has already

received 236 applications for licences, which shows that Jamaica is ready and willing to do what it takes to sit at the global table and advance with the times.

As we continue to focus on topical issues, the FMS requests the continued support from our academicians, as well as the private and public sectors and civil society. The purpose of these activities is to aid the public and to arm our region with knowledge that will safeguard the lives of the region and the wider world. As always, we are grateful for the attendance and input from our alumni both locally and internationally. I sincerely hope that this conference proffers information useful to you in your continued learning.

I must commend the Chairman, Professor Paul Brown, and his team for their continued dedication and commitment to hosting this annual event. I congratulate his team who have worked tirelessly in coordinating and planning for the ARC, and I must also thank our sponsors: National Health Fund (NHF), The Gleaner Company, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, Coldwell Banker Jamaica Realty, Fidelity Motors and Polly Ho.

The activities which will take place during these research days are for the benefit of all, and I hope that you will be engaged and excited participants. I wish you all a productive conference.

Dr Tomlin Paul  
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