

## The Faculty of Medical Sciences, St Augustine, and its contribution to Human Resource Development in the Caribbean

M Lewis

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The University of the West Indies (UWI), Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS), St Augustine campus, began teaching its undergraduate programme in October 1989, in three Schools: Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine. The first batch of students graduated in 1994. A four-year Pharmacy Programme commenced in 1995, producing its first graduates in 1999 and ten years later an accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing was started and saw its first graduates in 2006. In its twenty years of existence, the FMS has graduated 2380 students from its undergraduate programmes. The faculty has thus strengthened the human resource capacity in the health sector of most of the contributing territories of the Caribbean region and the vast majority of the undergraduates have been from Trinidad and Tobago.

**Objective:** To present a longitudinal study of the number of graduates from 1994 to 2008, and to highlight the number of doctors, dentists, veterinarians, pharmacists and nurses in the region and beyond, who have graduated from the programmes of the FMS.

**Rationale:** The FMS, St Augustine, plays an important role in producing qualified health personnel. The study is a compilation of graduates from the UWI, FMS, St Augustine from 1994 to 2008. The first batch, which started in 1989, graduated in 1994. No other compilation of this type exists for other faculties.

**Methods:** Data were obtained by harvesting the names of graduates from the graduation booklets, and by cross-checking administration records of the Faculty's Office.

**Results:** The study shows that fifteen of the sixteen contributing Caribbean territories have had graduates from the FMS, St Augustine, with Anguilla the one exception. Other graduates have come from beyond the region, including 16 developed and developing nations.

**Conclusion:** The FMS, St Augustine, serves a key role in providing health professionals for the region.

**Keywords:** Biomedical personnel, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Human resource development, St Augustine

## La Facultad de Ciencias Médicas "Saint Augustine" y su Contribución al Desarrollo de los Recursos Humanos en el Caribe

M Lewis

### RESUMEN

**Introducción:** Como parte de la Universidad de West Indies (UWI), la Facultad de Ciencias Médicas (FCM) – campus de Saint Augustine – comenzó la enseñanza de su programa de pregrado en octubre de 1989, en tres escuelas: Medicina, Odontología y Medicina Veterinaria. El primer grupo de estudiantes se graduó en 1994. Un programa de Farmacia de cuatro años comenzó en 1995, y produjo sus primeros graduados en 1999. Diez años más tarde comenzaría un programa acelerado de

*Licenciatura en Enfermería, que produciría sus primeros graduados en 2006. En sus veinte años de la existencia, la FCM ha graduado 2 380 estudiantes en los programas de pregrado. De este modo, la facultad ha fortalecido la capacidad de los recursos humanos en el sector de salud de la mayoría de los territorios contribuyentes de la región caribeña. La inmensa mayoría de los graduados de pregrado han sido de Trinidad y Tobago.*

**Objetivo:** *Presentar un estudio longitudinal del número de graduados de 1994 a 2008, y resaltar el número de doctores, dentistas, veterinarios, farmacéuticos y enfermeras dentro y fuera de la región, que se han graduado de los programas de la FCM.*

**Antecedentes:** *La FCM "Saint Augustine" desempeña un importante papel en la formación de personal de la salud calificado. El presente estudio constituye una compilación de los graduados de UWI, FCM, Saint Augustine de 1994 a 2008. La primera promoción, que empezó en 1989, se graduó en 1994. No existe ninguna compilación de este tipo para ninguna de las otras facultades.*

**Métodos:** *Los datos fueron obtenidos buscando los nombres de los graduados en los boletines de graduación, y chequeándolos contra la información existente en los archivos de la Secretaría de la Facultad.*

**Resultados:** *El estudio muestra que quince de los dieciséis territorios que constituyen el Caribe, han tenido graduados de la FCM "Saint Augustine", con Anguilla como única excepción. Otros graduados han venido de más allá la región, incluyendo un total de 16 países – desarrollados y en vías de desarrollo.*

**Conclusión:** *La FCM de Saint Augustine desempeña un papel clave en la formación profesionales de salud para la región.*

**Palabras claves:** Personal biomédico, Facultad de Ciencias Médicas, desarrollo de recursos humanos, Saint Augustine

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## INTRODUCTION

The major role of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS), St Augustine, is to train doctors, dentists, veterinarians and pharmacists, and since January 2005, nurses, for Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean region and beyond. This role is borne out by the mission statement of the FMS which is "to recruit and train students as healthcare professionals in Medicine as well as in Dentistry, Veterinary Sciences and fields allied to health; to meet the needs of and improve the healthcare delivery system for the people they serve, by striving for professional excellence throughout their career in this constantly changing world. To contribute to the social, economic, and cultural development of the Caribbean by maintaining a Centre of Excellence, inculcating in graduates an attitude of excellence in service and research."

These trained healthcare professionals make an invaluable contribution to society. When some from these ranks are of such calibre that they return to the faculty as members of the Academic Staff, this can be considered an incalculable achievement of the FMS, and there are approximately 40 persons who, at one time or another, over the years, fit this category.

The belief by the Associate Dean, Communications, that librarians "can find anything" was offered as a challenge at a meeting of the Public Relations (Communications) Committee in January 2004. That challenge was the genesis of a quest to record one of the FMS's most visible successes, its graduates and their achievements.

## RATIONALE

The students of the Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS), St Augustine, have been invariably described as "the cream of the crop", "the best and the brightest", "the crème de la crème", and "on par with the best in the world". It has been said that reports coming back from other universities about FMS graduates who have gone abroad for further study have always been exceedingly positive. All educational institutions are judged by the standard of their graduates. In recent times, the highest officials of the UWI expressed a wish that there could be some promotional publication /material that showcases the FMS, St Augustine, and all that it has been able to achieve during its short existence. That goal may be partly achieved with this publication. Could it be the foundation on which the history of the FMS will be written? This author does not believe that any other faculty on the UWI, St Augustine campus, has such a compilation of all its graduates from inception.

## BACKGROUND

The Mount Hope Complex was completed in 1986. This facility was built by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago based on the recommendations from members of the UWI, FMS, who were based almost exclusively at UWI, Mona, Jamaica, at that time, and their feasibility study. Key factors contributing to the development of this new facility were: (i) resources at the Mona campus were stretched (ii) there was also a need for expansion of medical education to the Eastern Caribbean and (iii) the drive to embrace Problem-Based

Learning, (PBL) as a new method of teaching, which is thought to engender life-long learning skills. After the completion of the Complex, there was a delay to the commencement of teaching due to economic and political changes, and the FMS, St Augustine, opened in October, 1989.

### Academic Programmes

The Faculty of Medical Sciences began teaching in the undergraduate programme in October 1989, in three Schools: Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine and the first batch of students graduated in 1994. The four-year Pharmacy Programme commenced in 1995, producing its first graduates in 1999. Ten years later an accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing was started and saw its first graduates in 2006. The Faculty now has a five-component Medical Education Programme. A Bachelor of Medicine, obtained after the first three of five years of medical school was later introduced, and the first graduation of this particular programme was in 2008.

### School of Medicine

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) The MBBS Programme which spans five years is divided into three pre-clinical and two clinical years. Upon successful completion of the course of study, graduates must follow an 18-month internship in order to be eligible for certification by the Medical Council and full registration to practise medicine. Source: [http://sta.uwi.edu/fms/prog\\_dm.asp](http://sta.uwi.edu/fms/prog_dm.asp)

### School of Dentistry

#### *Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)*

The Dental Programme leads to the Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) and extends over five years. The Pre-Clinical phase spans two years and utilizes a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) methodology. The three clinical years leading to graduation, involve supervised patient management and prevention of oral and dental diseases. Upon the successful completion of the DDS degree, graduates are required to follow a programme in General Dentistry for a period of 12-months prior to certification by the Dental Council as being eligible for full registration to practise dentistry. Source: <http://sta.uwi.edu/fms/programmes.asp#dentistry>

### School of Veterinary Medicine

#### *Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM)*

The veterinary education programme leads to the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) and extends over five years. The pre-clinical phase spans two years and in the first semester of study medical, dental and veterinary students together analyse integrated system-based problems. During the clinical phase, students are expected to do clinical rota-

tions and are usually assigned to Clinical Clerkships at the Veterinary Hospital of the School of Veterinary Medicine. Source: [http://www2.sta.uwi.edu/uwivet/undergraduate\\_dvm\\_programme.asp](http://www2.sta.uwi.edu/uwivet/undergraduate_dvm_programme.asp)

### School of Pharmacy

#### *Bachelor of Science Degree in Pharmacy (BSc Pharmacy)*

The programme of study in Pharmacy leads to the BSc Pharmacy and extends over four years. The curriculum consists of: an integrated programme of Basic Medical Sciences, an intensive programme of Community Health, Social Sciences, Pharmacy Studies, Pharmacy Practise, Clinical Pharmacy, including Home Healthcare and Outreach Programmes and Communication Skills. Source: <http://sta.uwi.edu/fms/pharmacy/programmes.asp>

### School of Advanced Nursing Education: Bachelor of Science (Nursing)

This programme will be conducted over a two-year period on either a full time or part time basis except in those cases where special requirements are satisfied. Source: <http://sta.uwi.edu/fms/sane/>

### METHODS

Data were obtained by harvesting names of graduates from the graduation booklets, 1994 to 2008 and a database was created. Lists of new students were also collected by the Medical Sciences Library from the Faculty on a regular basis. Records from the Faculty's Office were used to cross-check the results. Reconciling the records, locating the booklets for the missing years, ensuring the accuracy of honours and distinctions, verifying names, country of origin, and compiling the listing of "staffers" all took a lot more time and an enormous amount of scrutiny than was initially envisaged.

**Results:** (Table 1, Figure 1, Table 2, Figure 2 and map)

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Some interesting figures have emerged from the study. With the exception of Anguilla, every territory had graduates from the FMS, St Augustine. The three campus territories, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, along with the Bahamas had the highest numbers, 56, 65 and 1709 respectively, and 114 for The Bahamas.

#### *School of Pharmacy*

The Bahamas had five graduates from the School of Pharmacy, one each in 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008; while Barbados had two in 2004 and one each in 2005, 2006 and 2008; and Grenada had one graduate in 2008. Non-Caricom graduates included four from Botswana, one from Canada and one from India. Trinidad and Tobago had a total of 194 graduates.

Table 1. Graduates of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, St Augustine, by discipline

	UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES						Total
	MBBS	DDS	DVM	B. Pharm	B. Nursing	B. Med	
1994	57	17	6				80
1995	57	10	9				76
1996	77	13	5				95
1997	64	13	9				86
1998	64	16	12				92
1999	110	9	10	14			143
2000	141	9	16	17			183
2001	113	15	14	24			166
2002	67	15	15	17			114
2003	134	20	11	18			183
2004	115	26	19	23			183
2005	84	28	12	10			134
2006	113	30	17	26	32		218
2007	125	21	15	30	72		263
2008	121	24	23	32	9	155	364
<b>Total</b>	<b>1442</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2380</b>

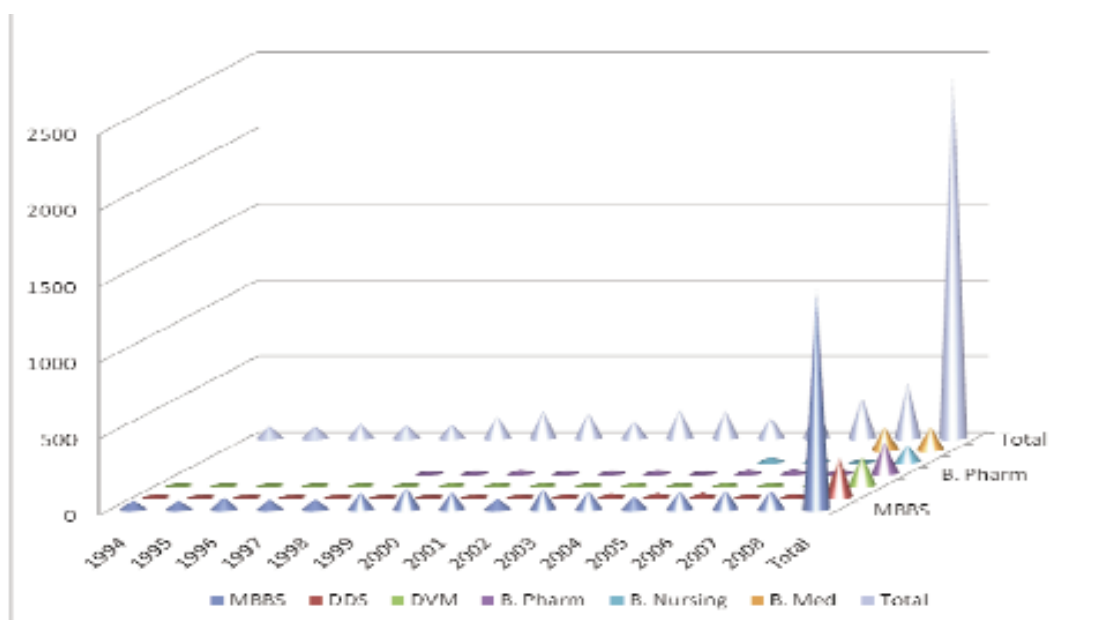


Fig. 1: Graph showing the growth in the number of graduates 1994 to 2008

#### School of Dentistry

Apart from the following nine persons (two from Canada, two from India, one American, one from Suriname and three from Botswana) from non-contributing territories, there were 25 graduates from Jamaica, 16 from Barbados and three from St Vincent. The country of origin could not be verified for nine persons. All the rest (204) were from Trinidad and Tobago.

#### School of Veterinary Medicine

There was one person graduating from the School of Veterinary Medicine from The Bahamas, while 16 graduates were from Barbados. There was one each from Dominica, Montserrat, St Kitts/Nevis and St Lucia and 23 from Jamaica. Eighty-four were from Trinidad and Tobago.

#### School of Advanced Nursing Education

Of the graduates from the School of Advanced Nursing Education, 104 were from Trinidad and Tobago, with one

Table 2. Snapshot of graduates by country and discipline for 1994 to 2008 for Caribbean territories

Country	MBBS	DDS	DVM	B. Pharm	B. Nursi	Bach. Med	Total
Anguilla							
Antigua/Bar	1						1
Bahamas	102	1	1	5		5	114
Barbados	6	15	16	5	1	13	56
Belize	10					1	11
BVI						1	1
Dominica	14		1		3	3	21
Grenada	7			1	2		10
Guyana	11					1	12
Jamaica	15	25	23		2		65
Montserrat	2	1	1				4
St Kitts/Ne	4		1				5
St Lucia	21		1				22
St Vincent/	8	3			1		12
T'dad & T'	956	204	128	194	104	123	1709
Turks/Ca	1						1

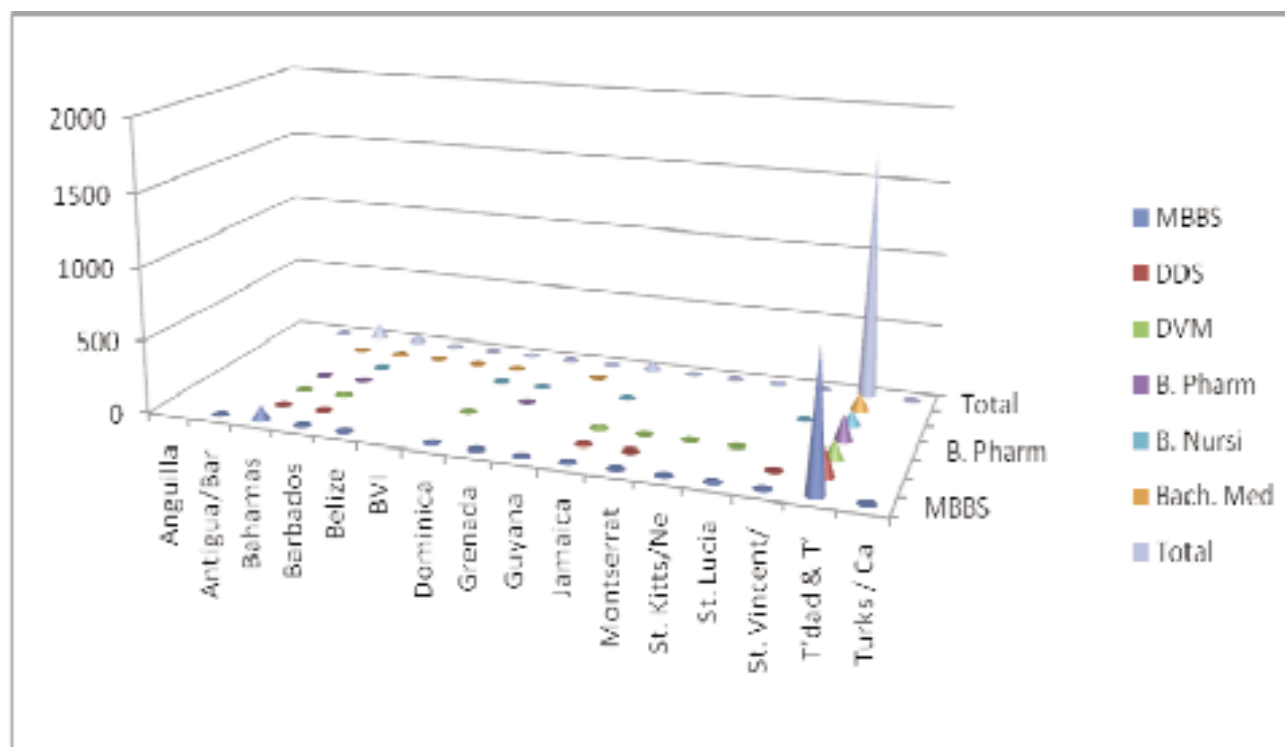


Fig. 2. Graph showing graduates by country and by discipline

each from Barbados and St Vincent, two each from Grenada and Jamaica and three from Dominica.

#### *School of Medicine*

The School of Medicine with its 1442 graduates saw the following breakdown of figures for Caribbean territories: one

Antigua/Barbuda, 105 Bahamas (three of whom graduated with the Bachelor of Medicine and are continuing in the MBBS programme), 19 Barbados (13 of whom graduated with the Bachelor of Medicine and are continuing in the MBBS programme), 10 Belize, 14 Dominica, seven Grenada, 11 Guyana, 15 Jamaica, two Montserrat, four St Kitts/Nevis,



\*Map of the Caribbean showing total number of graduates in each territory

21 St Lucia, eight St Vincent. Trinidad and Tobago had 956 trained doctors.

Though not the focus of this paper, mention must also be made of 284 non-Caricom graduates: 22 from Botswana (three of whom are continuing in the MBBS programme); 36 from Britain/the UK; 29 from Canada; one from Germany; 20 from India; two from Kenya; 71 from Malaysia; one from the Netherlands; one from the Netherlands Antilles; three from Nigeria; two from Saudi Arabia; three from Singapore; three from South Africa; 17 from Sri Lanka; two from Tunisia and 74 from the USA, who were trained at the FMS, St Augustine.

## CONCLUSION

The FMS, St Augustine, continues to respond to the mandate of health for all and to strengthen the capacity of the various territories of the Caribbean region in the area of health, and plays a key role in providing health professionals for this region.

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