



## **UG Alumni E-News**

**Greetings from the University of Guyana!**

**June 2005 Bulletin No. 4 – 05**

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### ***University Football Team plays in Suriname***

The University football team participated in two matches with teams from the Anton de Kom University in Suriname on June 3 and 4. It was the first tour in several years for a UG sports team through a link established with the neighbouring University in the 1970's. The UG team played against the Anton de Kom University Faculty champions and later against the University team. Although they lost both matches, their coach, Mr. Joseph Wilson expressed satisfaction with the team's performance, saying that they performed well and were good UG ambassadors. Sports Organiser, Mr. Claude Blackmore praised the students for the hard work they put in to make the trip a reality and stressed the need for a link between academics and sport. The Grace Kennedy Remittance Services (Guyana) Ltd. (Western Union) provided transport for the players and donated 20 jerseys valued at G\$300,000. Mr. Kamal Dookie of CGX made a contribution to defray living expenses during the tour, while the University of Guyana Students' Society (UGSS) contributed G\$30,000. Dr. Mark Kirton, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, who was also the team's Manager, said that the University "was embarking on an exercise that would develop a long lasting friendship not only in the field of play, but culture and activities involving youths". He said that "the exchange should help reduce misconceptions present between the two States". Dr. Kirton stressed that preparation was not only for football training, but also for sensitising the players that they were going as ambassadors to enhance the University's image.

### ***Remembering Dr. Walter Rodney***

The University of Guyana held a Panel Discussion to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Dr. Walter Rodney on June 9 at the Education Lecture Theatre, Turkeyen Campus. Panelists included Dr. Umberto Brown of the New York State University; Mr. David DeCaires, Publisher of the Stabroek News; Professor Rupert Lewis of the University of the West Indies (UWI) and Research Fellow at the University of Warwick, Mr. Kampta Karran. Tributes were paid to the slain author, politician and historian, and his ideas for combating oppression and injustice were widely discussed. Mr. Tota Mangar, Dean of the School of Education & Humanities and Historian was moderator of the session.

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### ***Art Exhibition at Berbice Campus***

On June 10, the Division of Creative Arts of the School of Education & Humanities held an Art Exhibition at the University's Tain Campus. The objective of this exhibition was to showcase work done by students at the Turkeyen Campus and to encourage the Tain institution to introduce the Fine Arts Programme on their curriculum. At present only Art Education, which is a theoretical course is offered there. Exhibits consisted of textiles, paintings, sculptures and ceramics and were viewed by students, school children and the general public.

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### ***Workshop on Edible Mushroom Cultivation and Marketing Avenues***

The University of Guyana, Berbice Campus held a Workshop on Edible Mushroom Cultivation and Marketing Avenues at the Tain Campus from June 20 – 30. The Workshop was organized by the Division of Agriculture, University of Guyana, Berbice Campus in collaboration with the National Agricultural Research Institute of Guyana. The major focus of the Workshop was to expose persons to low cost technology which could be used in the cultivation of edible mushrooms and to promote awareness in marketing avenues for edible mushrooms in Guyana.

### ***World Environmental Day***

On June 16, GUYBERNET, a Global Sustainable Development Information & Training Centre with the support of the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO) hosted a panel discussion to observe World Environment Day. The theme of the discussion was: Green Cities- Plan for the Planet (theme for World Environment Day) and the event was chaired by Mr. Quacy Grant, Lecturer at Queens College and official at GUYBERNET. The discussion was held at the Demerara Mutual Life Insurance building in Georgetown and presenters included Ms. Shanomae Rose, Lecturer at the University's School of Earth & Environmental Sciences, Dr. Patrick Williams, Programme Coordinator of World Wild Life (Guyana) and Lecturer in the School of Education & Humanities and Mr. Rawle Edinboro of Central Housing & Planning, Ministry of Housing and Water. The introduction was given by Mr. Mustapha Jules, Lecturer in the Faculty of Natural Sciences. In his opening remarks, PAHO Environmental Health Advisor, Dr. Teofilo Monteiro dwelled on the problems linked with urbanization and solid waste management. He stressed the need for an environmental culture worldwide in order to promote better environmental health. Ms. Rose spoke about the quality of the current public sector housing drive. She noted that in its haste to provide as many persons as possible with housing lots, little attention was placed by the government on quality – hence the ensuing environment problems. She went on to say that "The Improper Land Use Plan" which would have prevented many activities that occurred to the detriment of health, never came to being. Dr. Williams dealt with the overall planning situation.

## ***Equipping Science Labs at Turkeyen***

Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Mr. Philip Da Silva, in an interview with journalists, expressed concern about the lack of equipment in the Science Labs and also about the lack of funds to equip them. He expressed the view that capital budget spending for the labs should be put in place. At present, student laboratory fees are used to buy equipment and supplies, and these funds are insufficient to refurbish the labs. Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Al Creighton said that the University has had to reroute \$12.5M of its budgeted funds toward lab equipment and supplies. It has been reported that students have been constantly complaining about poor conditions in the labs. Some new equipment has recently been bought but much more is needed to accommodate the number of students doing Science Programmes. Mr. Da Silva suggested that the Computer Science Department be used as a source of income for the Faculty by offering courses in software and hardware to students and the public during the summer.

## ***University Library Seminar***

The University Library held a seminar on Tuesday, June 28 in the Education Lecture Theatre. The discussants were: Ms. Gloria Cummings, Head, Caribbean Research Library who spoke on the topic "Librarians in the Information Age", Ms. Simone La Rose, Assistant Librarian, Berbice Campus who spoke on "Eco-Tourism in the Ancient County: The Case for the Orealla Community" and Ms. Somattie Sayrange, Assistant Librarian, Berbice Campus who spoke on the topic "Local Government in Guyana : the Question of its Efficiency : A Case Study".

## ***Library acquires Professor Craig's Collection***

On June 30, Professor Zellynne Jennings-Craig, wife of the late Professor Dennis Craig, former Vice-Chancellor of the University donated 388 books and 120 Journals from his private collection to the Library. At a simple ceremony held in the Education Lecture Theatre, Vice-Chancellor (ag.) Mr. Al Creighton, University Librarian, Ms. Yvonne Lancaster and Mr. Tota Mangar, Dean, School of Education & Humanities all expressed profound gratitude for the priceless collection. Professor Zellynne Jennings-Craig noted that her husband had a special place in his heart for UG and wanted his collection to be placed there for the benefit of all at the institution.

## ***University Librarian Retires***

Ms. Yvonne Lancaster, University Librarian retired on June 30 after giving more than 20 years of service to the University. She was honoured by the library staff on this day at a simple ceremony held in the Learning Resource Centre. Many tributes were paid to the University Librarian by her staff and she was presented with a token of appreciation for her contribution to the development of the library. Later in the evening the University Librarian was honoured by the University Administration at a dinner held in the Senior Common Room. Tributes were paid by those who served with Ms. Lancaster at the senior level and she was presented with gifts for her sterling contribution to the institution. The entire university community wishes Ms. Lancaster well in her future endeavours.

## ***Administrators on Leave***

During the month of June three Senior Administrators in the persons of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. James G. Rose CCH, The Registrar, Dr. David Chanderballi and the Bursar, Mr. John Seeram proceeded on varying periods of leave. This resulted in a series of acting appointments being made to facilitate the smooth functioning of the institution.

## ***Donations***

The University was happy to receive a donation of US\$1,500 from Guyanese Living in St. Lucia. The University also welcomed a donation of US\$215 from The St. Croix Library Association which was given towards the University of Guyana Library Flood Relief Effort. The donations were received on May 19 and June 15 respectively.

## ***Attendance at Meetings/Conferences/Seminars/Workshops***

Mr. Maxwell Jackson, lecturer in the Department of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Technology participated in a regional Workshop on Hydropower from June 1 – 3 in Dominica.

Mr. Quacey Cooper and Mr. Marlon Whitney, both attached to the University Library were part of the University's football team, which competed with a team from the Anton de Kom University in Surinam in a tournament from June 3 – 4. Mr. Claude Blackmore, Head of UG's Sports Division was also present.

Ms. Gloria Cummings of the University Library attended a conference hosted by the Association of Caribbean Universities, Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL) in Martinique from June 5 – 11.

Ms. Barbara Thomas, Coordinator of the University's Social Work Unit in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences attended a Training Course in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad from June 5 – 12. The Theme of the Training Programme was: Reinforcing Capacities of Local Government and Civil Society.

Dr. Mark Kirton, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences attended a Teachers Training and Curriculum Design Workshop hosted by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad from June 6 – 10.

Ms. Shanomae Rose, lecturer in the Environmental Studies Unit participated in a Consultation sponsored by the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat and CERTI in Barbados from June 6 – 8.

Dr. Marlene Cox, Director, Office of Resource Mobilisation and Planning, represented the University at a meeting of the Inter-American Organisation for Higher Education in Caracas from June 8 – 10.

Mr. O'Neil Greaves and Dr. Michael Scott of the Faculty of Social Sciences attended a Quality Enhancement Conference at the University of the West Indies St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad from June 7 – 10. Dr. Scott also participated in CAPE/CXC activities in Jamaica from June 28 – July 17.

Mr. Cyril Solomon of the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences attended meetings of the Caribbean Examinations Council in Jamaica from June 7 – 15.

Mr. Lennox Hernandez, Head of the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Technology attended the 2005 Workshop of the Caribbean Association of Architects' Societies from June 9 – 11 and presented a paper on behalf of the Guyana Institute of Architects.

Professor Aubrey Bishop, Head of the Department of Law, attended a Law Faculty Board Meeting at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados from June 9 – 11. Professor Bishop also attended the monthly meeting of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) on June 17.

Professor Clive Thomas, Director of the Institute of Development Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences participated in a Caribbean Policy Development Centre Workshop held in Trinidad from June 14-17.

Mr. Daam Barker, Students' Counselor attached to the Faculty of Social Sciences attended a Conference of the Caribbean Tertiary Level Personnel Association from June 14 – 16.

Dr. Wallis Best-Plummer, Head of the Department of Pharmacy attended a Meeting of The Caribbean Allergy and Respiratory Association on June 16 – 17, and also held discussions with Staff of the Pharmacy Department of the University of the West Indies St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad & Tobago about the possibility of introducing the B. Sc. Degree in Pharmacy at UG.

Mrs. Melva Persico, lecturer in the Department of Language & Cultural Studies, School of Education & Humanities attended CAPE Meetings in Barbados and Trinidad from June 20 – 25 and June 29 – July 8 respectively.

Ms. Valerie Goorasammy Smith of the Department of Language & Cultural Studies, School of Education & Humanities attended an Eastern Caribbean Conference for International Leadership from June 22 – 24 in Barbados. The Conference was hosted by the Eastern Caribbean Council Of Nations and focused on Issues affecting Leadership.

Dr. Carl Hanoman, Director of the University's School of Medicine and Dr. Emanuel Cummings, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences participated in a Medical Accreditation Workshop in Trinidad & Tobago from June 23 - 25.

Ms. Tameka Sukhdeo, lecturer in the Department of Social Studies, School of Education & Humanities accompanied third year students majoring in Tourism on a field trip to Manaus, Brazil from June 24 – July 4. These students are required to submit a field report in order to complete their coursework.

Ms. Jewel Liddell, Head of the Department of Biology, Faculty of Natural Sciences attended a training course on Sustainable Environmental Management at the University of California, USA from June 27 – July 22.

Dr. Patsy Francis, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture & Forestry represented the University at the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting hosted by the Caribbean Food & Nutrition Institute (CFNI), University of the West Indies Jamaica Centre from June 28 – July 1.

Mr. Philip Da Silva participated in CAPE/CXC activities in Barbados from June 28 – July 15.

Mr. Derek Archer, Head of the Department of Language & Cultural Studies participated in CAPE activities in Barbados from June 28 – July 10.

## Featured Alumni

### Dr. Navindra Seeram



Dr. Navindra P. Seeram obtained his B.Sc. degree in Chemistry/Biology from the University of Guyana in 1990 and graduated with Distinction receiving the Vice-Chancellor's award for the best graduating student in the Faculty of Natural Sciences. During his undergraduate studies he also received awards such as the best third year student in organic chemistry and the best third year student in the Faculty of Natural Sciences. After his B.Sc. degree, he taught high school chemistry for two years in Jamaica. He then pursued graduate studies in Chemistry at the Faculty of Pure & Applied Sciences, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. His PhD dissertation under the mentorship of Professor Helen Jacobs, focused on the isolation of natural compounds from endemic Caribbean plants and their evaluation for potential medicinal properties. His PhD in 1998 resulted in the identification of a number of new plant compounds many of which showed potent anti-malarial, anti-insecticidal and anti-cancer properties. Whilst in graduate school, he also held positions as Senior Forensic Officer at the Ministry of National Security and as Scientific Officer at the Scientific Research Council of Jamaica. In 1999 he joined the Bioactive Natural Products and Phytochemicals group of Professor Muralee Nair at Michigan State University, USA, where he conducted postdoctoral research for three years. He then joined the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2002 where he is currently the Assistant Director of the UCLA Centre for Human Nutrition and Adjunct Professor at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. His research has been widely reported in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, trade magazines and at scientific conferences. He is also a co-inventor on two international patents involving the use of plant compounds for the treatment of cancer. He sits on several scientific advisory boards including the California Strawberry Commission and the US Wine Institute. He constantly serves as a reviewer of publications for scientific journals, as well as for grants of funding agencies both in the USA and internationally. He serves regularly as keynote speaker at national and international nutrition and scientific conferences. He is professionally affiliated with a number of scientific organisations including the Royal Society of Chemistry, the American Chemical Society, the American Society of Pharmacognosy and Sigma Xi. His current research interest is directed towards the evaluation of fruits, vegetables, spices and herbal medicines for the prevention and treatment of chronic human illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.

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This newsletter is a monthly publication created to keep our alumni updated with news at the University of Guyana. Each month an alumnus will be featured. If you are an alumnus please advise us of recent developments. If you would like to be featured, please send us your CV, a recent photograph and a letter telling us about yourself.

These can be emailed [here](#). Feel free to send your questions and/or suggestions [here](#). We look forward to hearing from you!

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*Serve Guyana*

Office of Resource Mobilisation & Planning, University of Guyana  
Turkeyen Campus, P.O. Box 10-1110, Georgetown, Guyana.