DEPARTMENT OF BASIC MEDICAL SCIENCES

Wayne McLaughlin, BSc Waterloo, PhD UWI
– Head of Department

WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT

In 2006/2007 the School of Physical Therapy joined the Department of Basic Medical Sciences, which no doubt makes the department one of the largest with thirty-five academic staff members. Although there are challenges because of the different physical locations and facilities, with cooperation of all the staff in the department we were able to fulfil our principal mandate of teaching and research. We however look forward to the new Basic Medical Sciences Complex which is slated to begin construction in the 2008/09 academic year. The complex will house all five sections with modern teaching and research facilities to accommodate our growing student population. A Quality Audit was undertaken of the department by the Quality Assurance Unit of the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS). The main recommendations of the audit were to prepare a quality manual and a strategic plan for the department. The first QA review of the department, rather than of Sections will take place in the 2007/08 academic year. The Biochemistry Section began to implement quality assurance procedures towards obtaining ISO17025 certification.

During the academic year the department benefited from the addition of new equipment and also academic staff. The Anatomy Section improved significantly in its delivery of histology practicals as a result of the installation of several plasma screens, audio visual system, a projection microscope and computers. A new bandsaw was also purchased for the Gross Anatomy laboratory. Several offices and laboratories were also equipped with new air condition units. A new -80°C ultra-low freezer was also installed in the Biochemistry Section. The computer facilities and internet access were upgraded through the laying of fibre optic cabling with the main campus and the Section of
Physical Therapy. A new 15-seater bus was also purchased for the Section of Physical Therapy. In the next academic year we will continue to improve the research equipment.

In 2006/07 student registration was about the same in most programmes except the FPAS Biochemistry, Biotechnology and Molecular Biology majors which grew by 26% over last year. There were 211 students registered in these majors. BB Med Sci programme which had 15 students was down by 3 from the previous year. One-hundred and sixty-one new students were registered in the MBBS programme and 13 in the Physical Therapy programme. Twelve students were accepted into the postgraduate programme.

Members of the academic staff and their postgraduate students participated in several international conferences, and were also successful in attracting significant research funds of approximately US$300,000. Drs. R. Irving, J. Mills, R. Wright-Pascoe and W. McLaughlin were awarded a research grant through the Mexican Program for International Cooperation for Development. The team will work with collaborators from the Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Medicas y Nutrition – Salvador Zubiran. The per capita publication rate for the department was 1.14, slightly down from the previous year.

The Department welcomed several new members of staff. Drs. Keerti Singh, Patrick Lodenquai, Roger Hunter, Shamir Cawich and R. Shetty joined the academic staff in Anatomy. Ms Carron Gordon, Sonja Williams and Gillian Hudson-Ducasse were welcomed as lecturers in Physical Therapy. Dr. Dalip Ragoobirsingh was promoted to Professor of Medical Biochemistry and Diabetology and Ms Thornia Smith was promoted to the post of Senior Administrative Assistant.

The Department said farewell to Professor Errol Morrison, Drs. Antony D’Souza, Liris Benjamin and Larry Daniels. Dr. Paul Singh was on sabbatical leave.

STAFF AWARDS

Professor Helen Asemota

– University Award for Teaching Excellence - Shaw University, North Carolina, USA, April 2007.
PAPERS PRESENTED


PUBLICATIONS
Books and monographs


Technical Reports


Refereed Journal Articles

WIMJ = West Indian Medical Journal


Chromatography (HPLC). Biomedical Chromatography 21: 48-54.


* O’Connor A, McFarlane-Anderson N, Duff EM, Wright-Pascoe R., Wint YB. (2006). High levels of F2-isoprostanes in


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Other Peer Reviewed Publications/Abstract

Choo-Kang E, Irving R, James J, Wright- Pascoe R. Day to day variation of Microalbumin excretion: Clinical Chemistry 2006 , 52 (6)


associated with consumption of sweet potato (Ipomoea batatas) phytic acid extract. WIMJ 55: (Suppl. 4) 23.


**INCOME GENERATION**

Research Grants:
Professor Helen Asemota, Dr. Andrew Wheatley,
Dr. Lauriann Young-Martin
Environmental Health Foundation: “Nutritional supplement for harm reduction in illicit drug addiction”. Ja $750,000
Drs Rachael Irving, James Mills, Rosemarie Wright Pascoe, Wayne McLaughlin

Mexican Program for International Cooperation for Development: “Early-Onset Type 2 Diabetes: Metabolic and genetic characterization in Mexico and Jamaica” US$100,000
Dr. Wayne McLaughlin, Mr. Compton Beecher, Dr. George Carmody

Principal’s New Initiative Fund: “Genetic variation in short tandem repeat (STR) loci in the Jamaican population” Ja $600,000
Dr. Dagogo Pepple

Principal’s New Initiative Fund: “Maternal blood viscosity and perinatal outcome in homozygous sickle cell disease” J$1.4 M
Dr. Oswald Simon and Nordia O’Connor

CHASE Funds: “The anti-diabetic potential of noni juice” Ja$895,000
Dr. Keerti Singh, Professor Joseph Frederick, Dr. Michael Boyne, Dr. William Aikens, Professor Norma McFarlane Anderson, Dr. Wayne McLaughlin

Principal’s New Initiative Fund: “Evaluation of oxidative stress, sperm DNA damage and genetics in male fertility and outcome of IVF and ICSI cycles” J$1.5 M.

PUBLIC SERVICE
Professor Helen Asemota

International Consultant for Biotechnology, United National Food and Agriculture Organization (UN-FAO), Tajikistan

Member, Delegate, Jamaica/Mexico VII Binational Commission

Member, Editorial Advisory Board of the International Journal of Biomedical and Health Sciences
– Founding Editor, State-of-the-art Strategies for Reaching Unreached Populations for Education, Development and Sustainability (STEPS-UP)

Dr. Paul Brown
– Member, Technical working group on Leptospirosis, Jamaica

Mr. Michael Gardner
– Executive member, Jamaica Historical Society

Dr. Kerith Golden
– Vice Chairman, Stock Form Road Citizens Association, Golden Spring, St. Andrew
– Member, Editorial Advisory Board for Stewarts Post harvest Review.

Dr. Maxine Gossell-Williams
– Vice President, Optimist Club of North St. Andrew
– Pharmacology Section Representative, Ministry of Health

Professor McFarlane-Anderson
– Member, International Proxy Parents Education Committee
– Member, Stella Maris HIV AIDS Ministry
– Member, Friend of Foundation for International Self Help (FISH).

Dr. Wayne McLaughlin
– Deputy Chairman, Biosafety Committee, National Commission on Science and Technology, Jamaica
– Council Member, Jamaica Society for Agricultural Sciences

Professor Dalip Ragoobirsingh
– Chief Examiner, CXC, CSEC Human & Social Biology.

Dr. Oswald Simon
– Observer, Technical Advisory Committee for the CARICOM Drug Testing Laboratory

Dr. Paul Singh
– Member, Caribbean Poison Information Network Management Committee

CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS
BB Med Sci.
Number of First Class Honours = 8
BSc Biochemistry/Biotechnology/Molecular Biology
Number of First Class Honours = 3
Physical Therapy
Number of First Class Honours = 2
Postgraduate Degrees Awarded:

Lorenzo Gordon – PhD Biochemistry
Patience Bazuaye – PhD Molecular Biology
Pamela McLaughlin – PhD Molecular Biology
Arkene Levy – PhD Pharmacology
Grace-Ann Bramwell – MPhil Biochemistry
Suzette Curtello – MPhil Biochemistry
David Garwood – MPhil Biochemistry
Tricia Miles – MPhil Biochemistry
Adrian Spence – MPhil Molecular Biology
Mark Grey – MPhil Pharmacology
Christopher Murray – MPhil Pharmacology
Kencliff Palmer – MPhil Pharmacology
Tamika James – MPhil Physiology