

UTech starts Doctor of Pharmacy Degree

The School of Pharmacy, College of Health Sciences at the University of Technology (UTech), officially launched its Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm. D.) degree programme, Tuesday (June 8), the first of its kind in the region.

Speaking at the launch at the Hilton Kingston Hotel, New Kingston, Associate Professor and Dean of the College of Health Sciences, Dr. Eugenie Brown-Myrie, said the programme is designed for highly motivated pharmacists desiring to advance their educational and professional career. She contended that the programme is significant, as there is a great demand for pharmacists to work in the clinical environment. She said the university hopes to train a cadre of pharmacists who will not be afraid to move out into the practice environment and to make a difference in how Pharmacy is practised and how patient care is delivered. President of UTech, Professor the Hon. Errol Morrison, said the launch was a proud moment in the full development of the institution's pharmacy programmes. He said given that many persons, throughout the region, would be interested in joining the programme, full use could be made of the university's Office of Distance Learning, particularly in terms of the taught aspect of the programme. The professor further stated that students from The Bahamas are already participating in UTech's other pharmacy programmes. The university currently offers the Master/Doctor of Philosophy (M Phil) in Pharmaceutics, the Bachelor of Pharmacy, as well as Pharmacy Technician programmes. Dr. Brown-Myrie said the Pharm. D. programme will be based on advanced content, which complements practise experience and fosters a higher level of competence and autonomy. It will also enable graduates to develop advanced analytical and problem-solving skills; include extensive clinical training; and foster the ability to translate theoretical knowledge into clinical applications. "The trained graduates will be equipped to provide better pharmaceutical care. The programme will also make it accessible for non-Caribbean nationals, who may find it more economically feasible to study in the Caribbean," she said. She added that with this degree, individuals will have access to training that will qualify them to integrate well into first world environments. To be qualified for entry, applicants should be registered practising pharmacists holding a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree, with a minimum of a Second Class Honours, from an accredited institution. Dr. Brown-Myrie noted however that persons with a pass degree may be accepted, but will need to be processed and, if necessary, be required to take qualifying courses. She further informed that applicants should have at least one year experience as a practising pharmacist and clinical experience from a recognised institution. The course of study will comprise 78 credits offered on a part-time basis over three calendar years, and will incorporate taught modules, practical modules, clinical clerkship and a longitudinal research project. The Pharm. D. programme is expected to be implemented by August this year. The launch was held under the theme: 'Charting New Frontiers in Pharmacy Education'.