



UNIVERSITY of GUYANA

Education as Liberation: Some Thoughts on Technology, Resilience and Change in Open Education

Prof Paloma Mohamed Martin

Vice Chancellor,

The University of Guyana



The Commonwealth is made up of 56 countries around the world

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent countries spread over every continent and ocean. Its over 2.5 billion people, who account for almost one fifth of the world's population, are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, Europe and the Pacific. They are of many faiths, races, languages and cultures.

The Commonwealth promotes peace and international co-operation, democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and the improvement of lives through economic and social development.

These values and aspirations are described in the Charter of the Commonwealth. The Charter expresses the commitment of member countries to the development of free and democratic societies, and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all Commonwealth people. It also acknowledges the role of civil society in supporting the goals and values of the Commonwealth.



COMMONWEALTH MEMBER	CAPITAL	COMMONWEALTH MEMBER	CAPITAL	COMMONWEALTH MEMBER	CAPITAL
1 ANTIQUA AND BARBUDA	SAN JUAN	22 JORDAN	Amman	48 ST KITC AND NEVIS	St Kitts
2 AUSTRALIA	Canberra	23 KENYA	Nairobi	49 THE MALDIVES	Malé
3 BANGLADESH	Dhaka	24 KUWAIT	Saudi	50 MALTA	Valletta
4 BARBADOS	Bridgetown	25 LAOS	Vientiane	51 MEXICO	Mexico City
5 BELGIUM	Brussels	26 LESOTHO	Maseru	52 MOZAMBIQUE	Maputo
6 BRUNAI	Bandar Seri Begawan	27 LIBERIA	Monrovia	53 MYANMAR	Nay Pyi Taw
7 BULGARIA	Sofia	28 LITHUANIA	Vilnius	54 NAMIBIA	Windhoek
8 CAMBODIA	Phnom Penh	29 LUXEMBOURG	Luxembourg	55 NEPAL	Nepal
9 CANADA	Ottawa	30 MALAYSIA	Kuala Lumpur	56 NETHERLANDS	Amsterdam
10 CHINA	Beijing	31 MALDIVES	Malé	57 NEW ZEALAND	Wellington
11 COLOMBIA	Bogotá	32 MALI	Bamako	58 NORWAY	Oslo
12 COSTA RICA	San José	33 MALTA	Valletta	59 OMAN	Muscat
13 CROATIA	Zagreb	34 MALTA	Valletta	60 PAKISTAN	Islamabad
14 CUBA	Havana	35 MALTA	Valletta	61 PANAMA	Panama City
15 CYPRUS	Nicosia	36 MALTA	Valletta	62 PARAGUAY	Asunción
16 DENMARK	Copenhagen	37 MALTA	Valletta	63 PERU	Lima
17 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Santiago	38 MALTA	Valletta	64 POLAND	Warsaw
18 ECUADOR	Quito	39 MALTA	Valletta	65 PORTUGAL	Lisbon
19 EGYPT	Cairo	40 MALTA	Valletta	66 ROMANIA	Bucharest
20 EL SALVADOR	San Salvador	41 MALTA	Valletta	67 RUSSIA	Moscow
21 ESTONIA	Tallinn	42 MALTA	Valletta	68 SAUDI ARABIA	Riyadh
22 FINLAND	Helsinki	43 MALTA	Valletta	69 SOUTH AFRICA	Cape Town
23 FRANCE	Paris	44 MALTA	Valletta	70 SRI LANKA	Columbo
24 GERMANY	Berlin	45 MALTA	Valletta	71 SINGAPORE	Singapore
25 GREECE	Athens	46 MALTA	Valletta	72 SOUTH KOREA	Seoul
26 GUATEMALA	Guatemala City	47 MALTA	Valletta	73 SPAIN	Madrid
27 HONG KONG	Hong Kong	48 MALTA	Valletta	74 SWEDEN	Stockholm
28 HUNGARY	Budapest	49 MALTA	Valletta	75 SWITZERLAND	Bern
29 INDIA	New Delhi	50 MALTA	Valletta	76 THAILAND	Bangkok
30 INDONESIA	Jakarta	51 MALTA	Valletta	77 TURKEY	Ankara
31 JAPAN	Tokyo	52 MALTA	Valletta	78 UGANDA	Kampala
32 JERSEY	Saint Helier	53 MALTA	Valletta	79 UNITED KINGDOM	London
33 JORDAN	Amman	54 MALTA	Valletta	80 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Washington DC
34 KAZAKHSTAN	Nur-Sultan	55 MALTA	Valletta	81 UZBEKISTAN	Tashkent
35 KENYA	Nairobi	56 MALTA	Valletta	82 VANUATU	Port Vila
36 KUWAIT	Saudi	57 MALTA	Valletta	83 ZAMBIA	Lusaka
37 KYRGYZSTAN	Bishkek	58 MALTA	Valletta	84 ZIMBABWE	Harare
38 LAOS	Vientiane	59 MALTA	Valletta		
39 LESOTHO	Maseru	60 MALTA	Valletta		
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77 MALTA	Valletta	98 MALTA	Valletta		
78 MALTA	Valletta	99 MALTA	Valletta		
79 MALTA	Valletta	100 MALTA	Valletta		

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The logo of the Commonwealth Secretariat is a stylized globe. The globe is composed of 56 squares, each representing a member state. The globe is surrounded by a ring of text: 'The Commonwealth Secretariat' at the top and '11 Whitehall London SW1A 2HS United Kingdom' at the bottom. The logo is in blue and white.

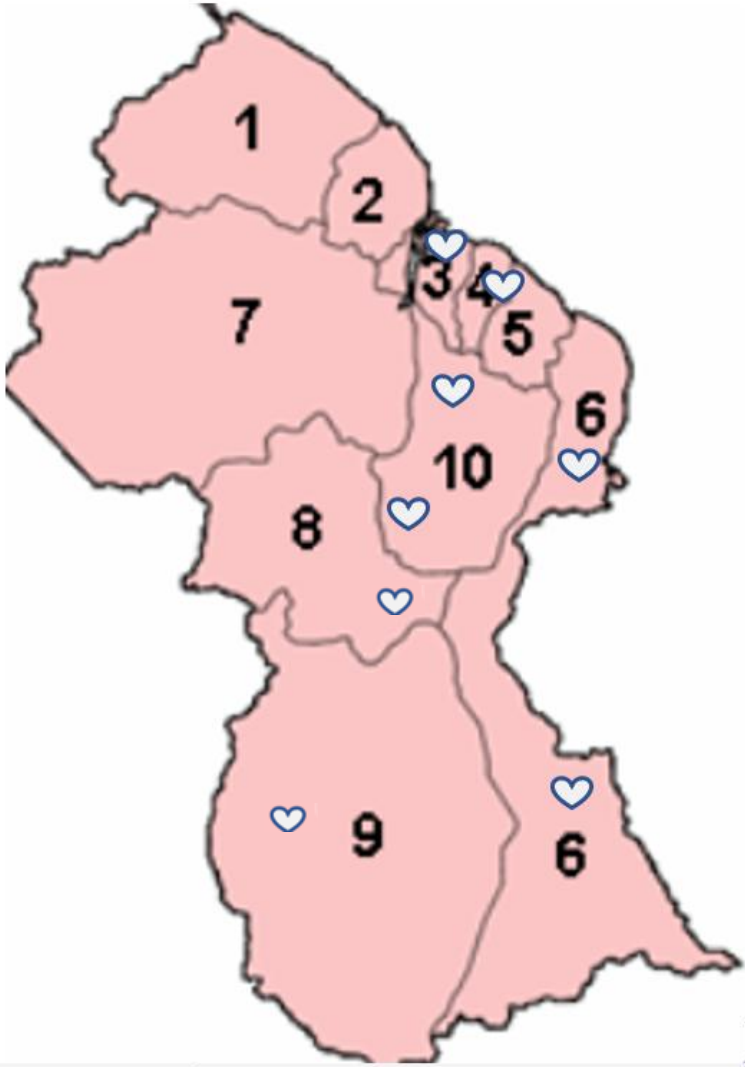
University of Guyana at a Glance (1963- 2025)

Campuses

- Georgetown
- Berbice
- Linden
- Essequibo
- Bartica
- Lethem
- Aishalton



12000 Students , 75000 graduates, 1200 staff
Ranked 1 Guyana , 3rd Caribbean, 14th Latin
America



**Education
is seldom
designed
to liberate
anyone.**

TRUE

Prof Paloma Mohamed Martin- Education as Liberation -
Keynote for Commonwealth of Learning PCL11 Botswana
Sept 2025

FALSE

Education Can Liberate

- 1. **Economic Emancipation:** *Each additional year of schooling raises an individual's earnings by an average of 8-10%, with significantly higher returns for women and marginalized groups*
- 2. **Liberation from Intellectual and Other Dependences:** *disrupts the "culture of silence" imposed by dominant groups, liberating the mind from uncritical conformity and enabling challenge of systemic inequity.*
- 3. **Redeeming Identity:** *Culturally responsive and accurate curricula counter historical erasure and stereotypes, validating the experiences and contributions of marginalized communities; fosters positive self-concept, communal pride, and psychological liberation from internalized oppression, is linked to improved academic and life outcome.*
- 4. **Multi-Domain Agency:** *Educated citizens are better equipped to navigate bureaucratic systems, advocate for their rights, hold leadership accountable, and shape policy, transforming them from subjects into agents.*
- 5. **Freedom from Misinformation and Poor Outcomes:** *Education, particularly for women, enables access to health information, improves health literacy and legal information increases agency over personal and familial health decisions, and leads to broader societal health gains.*

...But Under What Conditions?

**Technologies
are
Interest
Invested.**

TRUE

Prof Paloma Mohamed Martin- Education as Liberation -
Keynote for Commonwealth of Learning PCL11 Botswana
Sept 2025

FALSE

Technology

Technologies almost always intentional, functional, utilitarian, focused on harnessing human potential , extracting value or labor from humans

Until Now:

Technologies seem to be focused on automating , digitizing and essentializing human life and labor , freeing the human from many physical and cognitive endeavors once clearly defined and known

Potential for Tremendous Human Freedom

Expensive

Concentrated

Inaccessible

Dependency

Technology and Education

- Technology in the interest of the owners and controllers of technologies.
- Developed to serve a purpose.
- Highly intentional usually,
- There is a vast majority of humans for whom the question “What is your purpose “ is unanswerable or unclear.
- Technology which is likely to render less or no work for humans hence the importance of the question education for what , for whom, by who?
- Isolationist rather ecological perspective of the student as person not only as a worker.
- Must look at all aspects of the individual nested in communities. Gives direction and thought to not only who we need to teach but what and by what means and WHY?
- Who owns and controls the technologies that we are ready to adopt as panacea?
- Where is our knowledge, our thought , perspective, values, language's, culture , science, technologies, voice, agency in the mix?

Technology Tests Open Education: Virtual: AI, SM++

- A role for SM, TikTok, in education ?
- Re-structuring content, delivery and reach of AI+1 creation;
- Influencer as Teacher, Teacher as navigator and collaborator , peers and investors and collaborators;
- The ecology of the learner – the whole learner and the whole learning experience, process (birth to dirt)
- Device –led access - Hand held educators, brain chips, implants , glasses , assistive devices,
- Presents challenges to Open Education Model itself – competition, on demand, plug and play, skill as needed
- Leadership, authenticity and trust

Twenty Things to Think About/ Work Towards/ Do Now.

1. Strive for **True Inclusivity**
- 2, **Speak into the Silence?** Where are the Youth? Elderly?
3. **Avoid the Poles**
4. Turn Collaboration into **Synergy** (international composite degrees)
5. Need to be **nimble**
6. Assume that we **know nothing** (teachable spirit)
7. **Abolish Comfort** Zones: What do we know and why do we think we are knowledgeable about the future?
8. **Education for Life and Living** (choice enabled)
9. Education for **the Future** – The distant future
10. **Design to the Ecology of Endeavour** (Self actualization, **domain** inclusivity at every level)
11. **Avoid New/Social Media Snobbery**
12. Plan for Failure / **Inaccessibility of Technology** Too
13. **Unlock Wisdom as against Imparting knowledge**
14. Design **also for Instant. On demand. Inoculation education. SM, Tic Tok.**
15. Redefine... role of the teacher
- 16, liberate Students/ **liberate the innate**
17. **Redefine Role of Education** - what should we be educating for?/where/when/how
18. Polices for people , planet, peace
19. **Beginning of Post education era?**
20. **Total Command of Technologies' / Not technology averse**

Changing...

Blueprint 3- Emerging	Adaptability	Accessibility	Affordability	Earn as you learn	Speed
Mobility / transferability	Micro/Modular	Practical / Applied	Relevancy / Employability (present and future what opportunities can we provide?)	Flexibility (when, online, F2F, synchronous , asynchronous)	Value for Money (Cost/Free?)
	Designer Degrees (hybridity, agency, multi- interdisciplinary, strange specializations)	Funding Enterprise	What the country needs – region needs? Why?	Strategic – Tactical – Country, UG, Faculty- Unit	

If we listen we will hearIf we w to hear we will
listen



UG BLUEPRINT 2040 – ASPIRATIONAL GOALS

- One graduate per household
- World leader in specific knowledge, Techniques and Technologies
- Center of Excellence for Research on Guyana and the Regions Grand challenges
- A University fully focused on Creating Citizens Fit for Purpose and for the Future

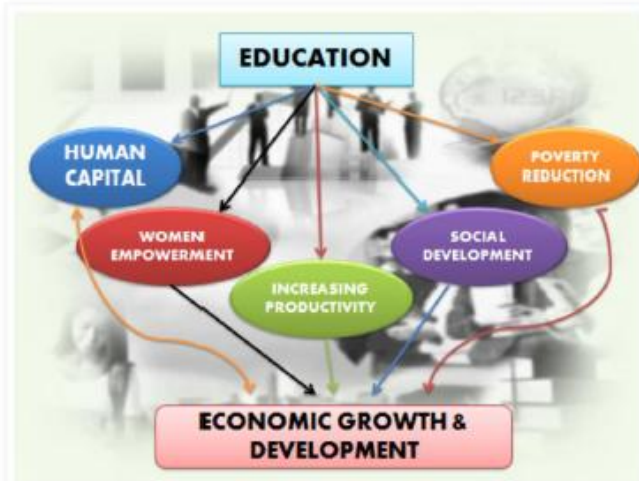


Figure 2: Role of education in economic development

Budget 2022's Main Strategic Focus:

- Building out Foundation for Delivering Quality Higher Education in Safety and Security
- Citizen Success Focus - Supporting Staff and Student Success (esp. Youth)
- Building out an enabling Teaching and Learning Environments on Three Campuses (UG Face to Face, IDCE and Virtual Campus)
- Supporting National Resilience and Strategic Development Priorities – Expansion of Berbice Campus and offerings; Equipping for Energy, Food, Infrastructure, Human Resilience, Health and Security.
- Efficient and effective management in a Covid to Post Covid Transition

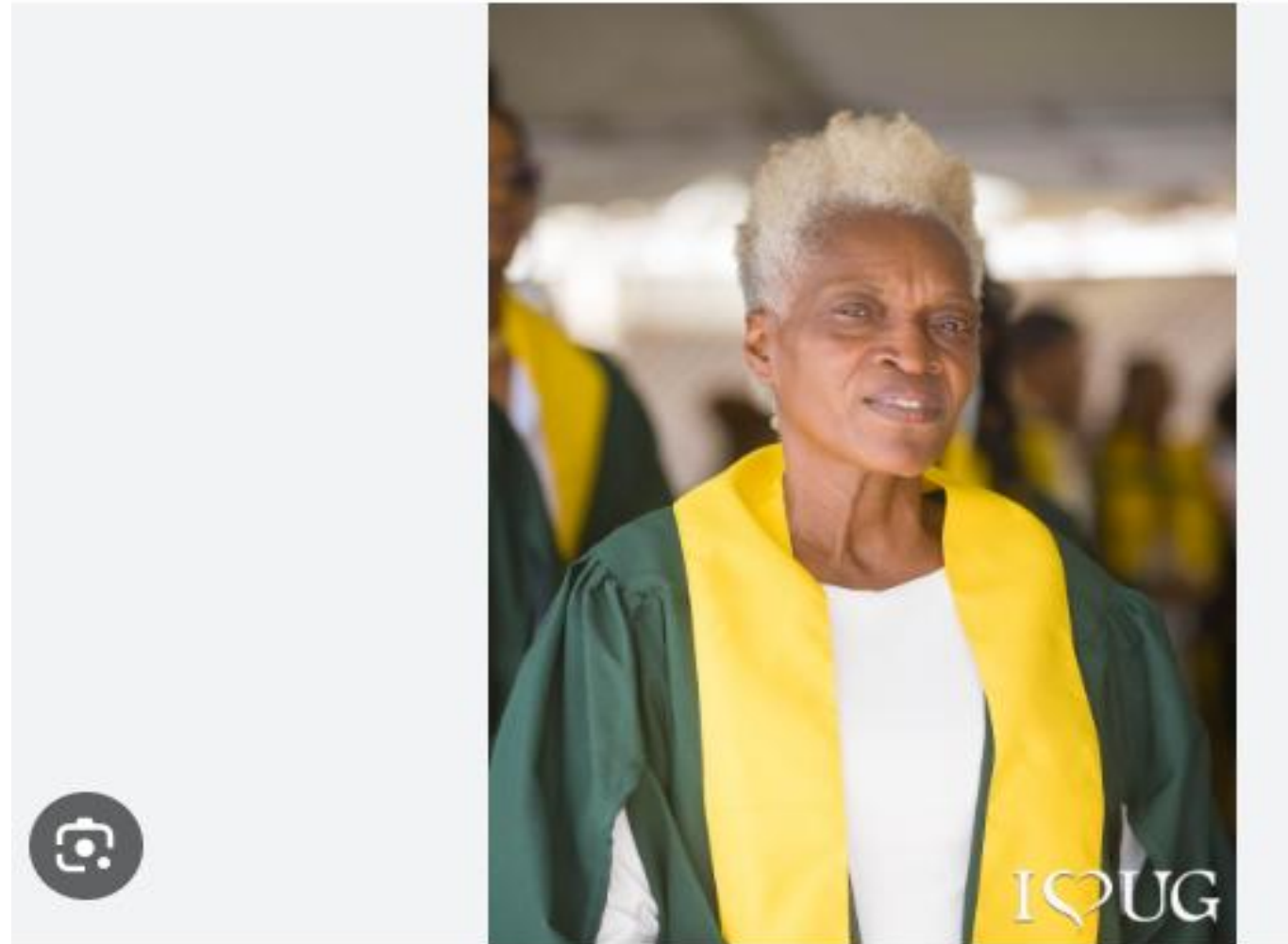
SUMMARY OF KEY TARGETS IN THE SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM



- University of
Blueprint 2040



Stabroek News



Seventy-two-year-old master's degree student is UG's oldest 2023 graduate - Stabroek News

Aspirational Goal 1- The Logic of least one graduate per household by 2040



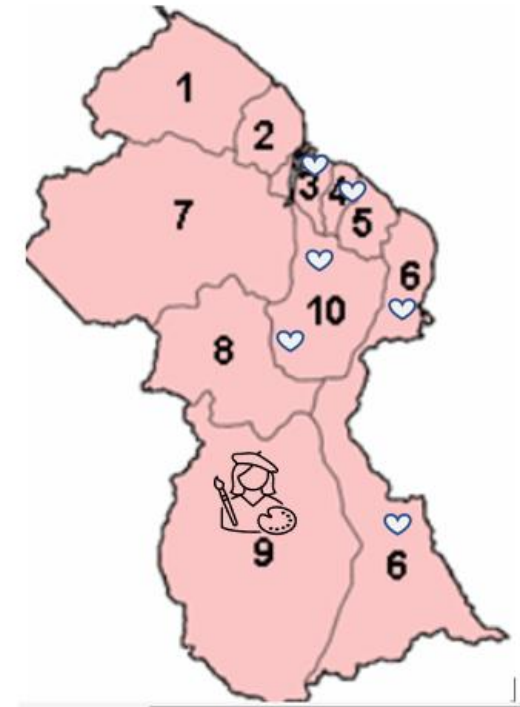
University of Guyana Graduand, Rajni Persaud

Friday, March 26, 2021 - 15:08

"My Physical Condition Did Not Prevent Me From Going After My Dreams" - Rajni Persaud, UG Graduand

Benefits

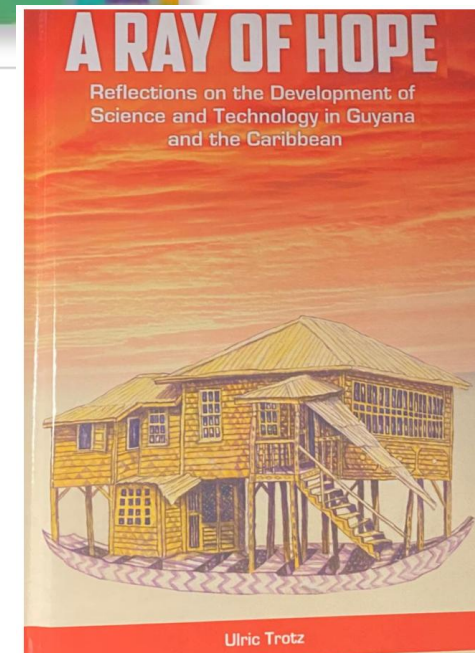
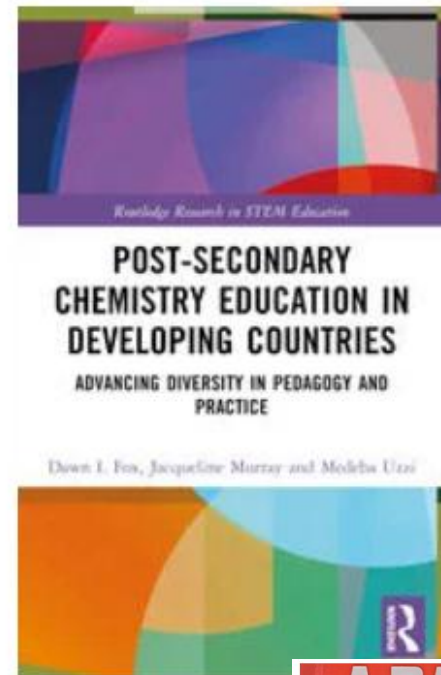
1. Increased Earnings
2. Lower Unemployment Rates
3. Greater Job Security
4. Enhanced Critical Thinking
5. Improved Communication Skills
6. Increased Cultural Awareness
7. Stronger Problem-Solving Abilities
8. Better Health Outcomes
9. Greater Civic Engagement
10. Enhanced Entrepreneurial Skills
11. Lifelong Learning
12. Improved Quality of Life
13. Improved Governance
14. Regional integration
15. Greater personal autonomy
16. Modeling – aspirational triggerin,



1. Prior to 2019- < than 3% total student population were from underserved regions (without the hearts)
2. Prior to 2019 < 1 % from Indigenous Communities
3. non-completion rate disproportionately higher – fewer graduates

<u>Taxonomy of Challenges</u>	<u>Key University of Guyana Response</u>
Ranking system	Policy for Underserved Communities
Mode of application	Variable options and acceptance of late applications, coordination with local Gov, GoG
Differential quality of education – science subjects	Policy for Underserved Communities, quota for applicants who meet criteria but rank lower
Lack of <u>knowledge</u> of process	Marketing, mentors, <u>fairs</u> , outreaches
Cultural factors	In situ education, Maokutau
Navigation and <u>living</u> resources at Gtown campus	Online Education, Inclusion Unit
Composition of scholarship packages	Must include subsistence, and other costs
Financial barriers /Travel costs routing and accessibility	Scholarships, waivers, payment plans, Flexibility, better with massive infrastructural works
Support and care systems	Student support fund, buddy system, students welfare awareness, inclusion unit and <u>polices</u> , intentional integration, work on campus ,
Return to communities	Support for this, close tracking
Few Role models	More exposure to successful persons fitting their profile
Low Aspirations	Seeking, steering, staying with, working with families and others
Not academically inclined/ lack of confidence/ Out of school	Links to other vocational programmes, gaming technology (Alpha) short skills and earner programmes, micro and stackable.

Key Strategies Employed in phase 1: 2020-2025





UG's University of the Forest Campus
of Guyana

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**“IS THE REAL
GOAL OF HIGHER
EDUCATION TO
PRODUCE
SUCCESSFUL
STUDENTS OR IS
IT RATHER TO
PRODUCE
SUCCESSFUL
CITIZENS?”**

**AND IF SO WHAT
WILL IT TAKE TO
DO THIS?”**



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- 16, liberate Students/ **liberate the innate**
17. **Redefine Role of Education** - what should we be educating for?/where/when/how
18. Intrepid Responsive **open Leadership-** Polices for people , planet, peace
19. **Beginning of Post education era?**
20. **Total Command of Technologies' / Not technology averse**



In 'bold & dramatic' move, UG could allow students to use artificial intelligence - News Room Guyana

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UG Adds Cutting-edge Master in Artificial Intelligence and Master in Information Systems to Suite of Graduate Programmes

Friday, September 6, 2024 - 15:53

UG Adds Cutting-edge Master in Artificial Intelligence and Master in Information Systems to Suite of Graduate Programmes



University of Guyana

Artificial Intelligence Policy For Staff and Students

V3. July 2024

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A purple and white poster for the 'ALPHA' event. At the top, it features the University of Guyana logo and a '60' anniversary emblem. The text reads: 'The University of Guyana has the distinct pleasure of inviting you to experience "ALPHA" our Virtual Augmented and Immersive Education Platform'. Below this, it specifies the location: 'Where: Education Lecture Theatre (ELT), Turkeyen Campus, University of Guyana', the date: 'Date: Friday, 7 June, 2024.', and the time: 'Time: 11:30hrs to 13:30hrs'. At the bottom, there is a red button that says 'Click here to join via Zoom' and the Zoom ID: 'Webinar ID 910 2325 2415'. A stylized graphic of a person wearing VR goggles is on the right side of the poster.

Facebook

**THANK YOU,
kindly.**

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