

KEEP RAISING THE BAR

The morning of 29th of November 2010 was not my typical Monday morning. Upon checking my emails prior to the grand ward round, there were an unusual number of emails in my inbox mostly titled **“OUM is now an internationally accredited medical school”**. The majority of emails were congratulatory messages from OUM staff, partners and friends to the Chairperson of the Council, Mrs. Taffy Gould, and staff for achieving Accredited Status Level I from the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) Board of Directors.

I paused for awhile to absorb this information and reminisce that only 11 months previously OUM had received its candidate status and everything just seemed to be happening too fast. I must admit that, in this instance, news did travel faster than the speed of light as by the time I arrived at the ward, NHS colleagues were already aware of OUM's good news. It was undoubtedly one of those great days which one would like to have more often.

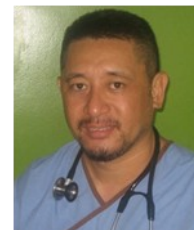
I wish to congratulate the Oceania University of Medicine for this great achievement. Well done.

However, the excitement of the accreditation success was short lived because I began to think deeply about what this means for OUM. This is because there are three other levels that we have to achieve and that inherently requires continuous commitment, dedication, and strategic planning from the Council, faculty and staff. It simply means that the expectations and requirements ahead of us are even higher.

What could be these requirements? I would start by paying a closer look at what and how we as a medical school need to do to sustain the momentum, which can be done by developing clear and articulate plans for the step by step actions before the next PAASCU visit in three years time.

Now with all the excitement behind us, there is a call for even stronger and sustainable commitment and dedication by all OUM staff. There is no room for negative attitudes and power struggles amongst staff and faculty members.

It is also a call for clear and strong leadership from the Directors and Deans so that faculty members have directives and policies that are healthy and conducive to improving professional performance and hence lead to achievable and realistic outcomes.



We need to recruit the best and most suitable staff through proper and established recruitment procedures and retain them by developing the best human resource practices and remuneration packages that are comparable to similar international institutions operating in Samoa and the region. In this regards the number of clinical staff and specialists should be increased to meet the increasing number of students entering the school. Employee development/training needs must be identified and supported whether it be short of long term studies.

We, as a newly established medical school, must establish links with other international medical schools and continue to maintain links with the University of Miami Medical School in the USA and the University of Auckland in New Zealand.

We must also foster the good relationships and partnerships that we have already established with local teaching hospitals and Ministries of Health.

We need to improve research opportunities and capacities for students and faculty starting by conducting small qualitative studies with durable methodologies.

The faculty must continue to improve the prep courses to better prepare OUM students for licensing exams like the United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE), Australian Medical Council Exam (AMC) and the New Zealand Regulation Exams.

The list goes on but this means that the we as an institution must continue to raise the bar with everything we do in order for us to perform competently at Accreditation Level 1 while in the process for preparing for Level II in three years time..

I would like to congratulate once again Mrs. Taffy Gould, Council Members, faculty, staff, partners and students of OUM for your contribution in achieving this very important milestone in our school's short history.

I challenge the OUM staff to take their rightfully earned place now amongst international medical schools with pride and dignity and always remember that everyone's contribution is important and we must work as one unit.

God Bless.

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