

# UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA LIBRARY (TURKEYEN) NEWSLETTER

Special Issue

June, 2025



## Mission Statement

The University of Guyana Library will strive to support the teaching and research activities of the University. It will provide the necessary human resources and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to meet the requirements of the electronic age, and serve as the beacon of academic research, both locally and internationally.

## National Library Week

**“Drawn to the Library: Rethinking the Future: Libraries as a Social Space”** April 7-11, 2025

National Library Week 2025 presented the University of Guyana Library with a timely opportunity to reflect on its evolving role within the academic and national landscape. Observed under the theme “Drawn to the Library: Rethinking the Future: Libraries as a Social Space,” this year’s celebration underscored the library’s transformation from a traditional repository of knowledge to a dynamic, inclusive space fostering engagement, collaboration, and intellectual growth.

The activities held throughout the week highlighted the library's growing relevance not only in supporting research and learning but also in cultivating a sense of community and shared purpose. As users are increasingly drawn to libraries for both academic enrichment and meaningful social interaction, this theme served as a catalyst to re-examine the ways in which library spaces are utilised, experienced, and imagined for the future.

This special issue offers a comprehensive reflection on the week’s events, featuring key highlights, perspectives, and contributions that collectively reaffirm the University of Guyana Library’s commitment to innovation, service excellence, and community building.

## Objectives of the University of Guyana Library

- To make the materials available to users
- To provide a service to the University and to the community at large
- To acquire and preserve books, journals and other materials related to fields of study within and outside of the University



# From Shelves to Spotlight: Highlights from National Library Week 2025

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NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

APRIL 6-12, 2025

*“Drawn to the Library: Rethinking the Future: Libraries as a Social Space”*

In celebration of the 67th observance of National Library Week, the University of Guyana Library organized a week of engaging and informative activities from April 7 to 11, 2025. This year’s theme, “Drawn to the Library: Rethinking the Future: Library as a Social Space”, highlighted the evolving role of libraries in modern society.

April 7, 2025

## *Opening Ceremony, Symposium, Workshop & Exhibition*

An Opening Ceremony & Symposium was conducted in a hybrid format at the Education Lecture Theatre, drawing a diverse group of participants who attended both in person and virtually. Attendees represented a wide range of libraries, archives, and information centres, including:

- Government Technical Institute
- National Insurance Scheme
- CARICOM
- National Archives
- Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
- Cheddi Jagan Research Centre
- National Library
- Bank of Guyana
- National Centre for Educational Resources Development (NCERD)
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- University of Guyana Libraries (Turkeyen and Tain campuses)
- Law Library, Attorney General Chambers
- University of Guyana Archives Unit
- Medical Services Library, Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation

## *Message from the University Librarian*



Ms. Debra Lowe,  
University Librarian,  
University of Guyana

Ms. Lowe extended a hearty welcome to all, both virtual and physical participants, and said that the University of Guyana Library was extremely pleased to collaborate with sister libraries to commemorate National Library Week 2025. She told the audience that a number of activities were organized for the entire week to not only showcase the services available to patrons, but also to embark on new ventures with the aim of remaining relevant in a changing educational landscape. According to Ms. Lowe, at this juncture, the University of Guyana Library’s mission is to enhance and expand its services, with the sole purpose of making an impact on the lives of clientele by bringing the library to them, in keeping with the wider university goals.

In her brief remarks, Ms. Lowe shared on the birth of National Library Week 2025 initiative. She referenced Guyana’s successful hosting of the 53rd (LIII) Association of Caribbean Universities, Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL) Conference in 2024, which brought libraries, archives and museums into the forefront and provided an avenue to showcase skill sets, expertise and most importantly, relevance and research capabilities through the many presentations.



Ms. Lowe said that after becoming University Librarian in September 2024, she thought of ways in which to continue to keep the work of libraries in the forefront to maintain relevance in this ever-changing landscape. Initially, her plan was to resuscitate the University of Guyana Library Professional Seminars which provided an avenue for librarians to present their research findings, have their research works peer-reviewed and to ultimately seek avenues to publish their research works. However, on second thought, it was decided that commemoration of National Library Week 2025 would be a more appropriate forum as it allowed for inclusion of other libraries and augured well for cooperation among the University of Guyana Library and other libraries in Guyana.

In closing, Ms. Lowe lauded the continued meaningful collaborations between UG Library and National Library and urged all present to participate, connect, reconnect and network as they share their experiences. She also took time out to thank the Planning Team and other stakeholders for whatever role they would have played in contributing to the success of the week of activities.

*Submitted by Ms. Washington*

## *Message from the Deputy Chief Librarian, National Library*



Ms. Nadine Moore,  
Deputy Chief Librarian,  
National Library

The Deputy Chief Librarian, Ms. Nadine Moore, brought wishes on behalf of the National Library. In her brief presentation, Ms. Moore examined the evolving role of libraries and highlighted how libraries transformed from the traditional mode, where they served as sanctuaries of silence and study, repositories of knowledge and keepers of books, to now being vibrant social hubs that foster community engagement, collaboration, and cultural exchange.

Ms. Moore said that the National Library recognized that the digital age has changed the way people consumed information and, in response, has pivoted toward fostering creativity, connectivity, and innovation and positioned itself as a “living room for the city”—a place not just for accessing knowledge, but for creating it. The National Library was no longer just the custodian of books and historical records, but has actively reimagined as a people-centered knowledge hub.

To emphasize this point, Ms. Moore, pointed out that while the National Library has maintained traditional reading areas, they have now opened a conference room for events and expanded their programming to reflect this evolving role. Some of the social-centred events identified were:

- Spoken Word Sessions and Cultural Workshops that celebrate and preserve local heritage.
- Health & Wellness Programs such as yoga, mental health talks, and nutrition sessions—particularly supporting seniors and caregivers, building trust and fostering holistic well-being.
- Job Readiness & Entrepreneurship Support, including résumé clinics, digital literacy classes, and small business workshops.

Ms. Moore concluded by reiterating how happy the National Library was in joining the University of Guyana Library in celebrating National Library Week 2025 as, over the years, the two libraries have built a strong partnership, sharing ideas, knowledge and collaborative projects. She ended by encouraging all present to continue to deliver services that promote literacy and advance their libraries ever plus ultra, beyond the ordinary.

*Submitted By Ms. Washington*

# Celebrating Excellence, Innovation, and the Enduring Spirit of Libraries – Prof. Paloma Mohamed Martin, Vice Chancellor, XI



Prof. Paloma  
Mohamed  
Martin, Vice  
Chancellor, XI,  
University of  
Guyana

The University of Guyana Library proudly celebrated National Library Week 2025 with a series of reflections, recognitions and calls to action. A key highlight was the stirring address delivered by Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paloma Mohamed, who joined the celebrations with a heartfelt tribute to library professionals and advocates across the nation.

In her remarks, the Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the tremendous contributions of individuals within the university library system, recognizing newly appointed Librarian, Ms. Debra Lowe and Deputy Librarian, Dr. Simone Bernard, as well as saluting the lasting legacies of former Librarian, Mrs. Gwyneth George, and Ms. Donette Washington. She extended warm appreciation to the broader team for their ongoing commitment, and to the partners from the National Library for their unwavering support.

Referencing the year's theme, "Rethinking the Future: Libraries as a Social Space," Professor Mohamed emphasized the importance of embracing innovation while safeguarding identity and cultural heritage. Drawing on her own experience and insights from the ACURIL conference, she noted the urgent need to digitize rare materials, stories, and cultural artefacts, many of which remain invisible in the digital realm. "Technology may bring convenience," she said, "but it also highlights the gaps in representation. The documents that tell our story must be preserved and shared widely, lest they slip into obscurity."

She called on library professionals to spearhead efforts in digitization, not just to modernize collections, but to preserve knowledge for future generations. At the same time, she encouraged critical thinking about the changing role of librarians, particularly as digital access increases and physical spaces evolve.

In her closing, the Vice-Chancellor urged libraries to act with urgency. She said that "The future is forged in the actions we take today. Let us future-proof not only our libraries but also our library staff. Let us equip them with the tools, training, and support needed to thrive in a rapidly shifting landscape." Her address ended with a powerful reminder that libraries, though vulnerable to modern threats, remain powerful symbols of truth, culture, and resilience.

The University of Guyana Library joins the VC in celebrating all library champions past and present and remains committed to innovation, access, and the enduring mission of librarianship.

Six engaging presentations were delivered by a diverse group of librarians during the symposium. Each presentation offered valuable insights into different aspects of library services, innovation, and professional development. The speakers shared practical experiences, emerging trends, and forward-thinking ideas that sparked meaningful discussions among attendees.



Mrs. Rosemond Carrol,  
Senior Assistant  
Librarian, Technical  
Services Division

Rethinking Library  
Space



Mrs. Bibi Harper-  
Fenty, Assistant  
Librarian, Readers'  
Services Division

Introduction to Library Services:  
University of Guyana Library



Ms. Surujdai Mangra,  
Assistant Librarian,  
Technical Services  
Division



Ms. Bibi Kalil,  
Assistant Librarian,  
Readers' Services  
Division

University of Guyana  
Library: A Hub for  
Learning, Research and  
Academic Success



Mr. Yashwant  
Ramroop, Senior  
Assistant Librarian,  
Systems Department

A Brief  
Introduction to  
Koha Integrated  
Library System  
and its Modules



Ms. Marsha-Gay  
Robinson, Deputy  
Programme Manager,  
Documentation  
Centre & Registry  
CARICOM Secretariat

Understanding ISBNs: A Guide for  
Caribbean Authors & Publishers



Ms. Rachel Peters  
Assistant Librarian,  
Berbice Campus  
Library

Exploring & Integrating the  
use of Generative AI at the  
University of Guyana  
Berbice Campus Library

Your Mental Health is Wealth



Ms. Audrey Benn, Head,  
Sociology Department

Ms. Audrey Benn is the Head of the Sociology Department at the University of Guyana, Turkeyen Campus. A dedicated educator and social scientist, she specializes in Gender and Development and has led extensive research and training on issues such as domestic violence, human trafficking, and social inequality. Ms. Benn is also a published author and community advocate, committed to empowering women and vulnerable groups across Guyana.

Two impactful workshops were conducted during the library symposium, each offering a unique perspective on the evolving role of libraries and the well-being of library professionals.

The first workshop, *"Your Mental Health is Wealth,"* conducted by Ms. Benn, focused on the importance of mental well-being in the workplace. It emphasized self-care strategies, stress management techniques, and the value of creating supportive work environments. Participants were encouraged to prioritize their mental health and left the session with practical tools to promote balance and resilience in their professional and personal lives.

"LIC!!": Libraries in Conversation

The second workshop, *"Libraries in Conversation,"* conducted by Ms. Washington, provided a platform for open dialogue among librarians from various institutions. This interactive session explored the range of services libraries currently offer, the diverse communities they serve, and their visions for the future. Attendees shared ideas, challenges, and success stories, fostering a sense of collaboration and shared purpose across the library network.



Ms. Donette Washington,  
Head (ag.) Technical  
Services Division

April 8, 2025

Male Empowerment Session



Ms. Eraina Yaw, Head  
of Office for IOM

Ms. Eraina Yaw is the Head of Office for IOM Guyana. A seasoned migration expert with over 14 years of experience, she has worked extensively across the Caribbean on migration governance, diaspora engagement, and emergency response. Ms. Yaw also has a background in child protection and continues to contribute to regional policy and training initiatives.

A powerful male empowerment session was conducted by Ms. Eraina Yaw, Head of Office at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Guyana and the Regional Coordination Office for the Caribbean. Held at the University of Guyana Library, the session was specially organized for male library staff and addressed critical issues such as domestic violence, abuse, and emotional well-being. Ms. Yaw led an open and engaging discussion that encouraged participants to reflect on healthy masculinity, the importance of emotional intelligence, and the courage it takes to walk away from toxic environments. The session created a safe space for honest dialogue, self-awareness, and empowerment, emphasizing that strength also lies in choosing peace, respect, and support for oneself and others.



# Preserving Mental Health while Providing Library Services

Ms. Latoya Beckles is a committed mental health professional and academic, currently serving as the Undergraduate Coordinator for Social Work at the University of Guyana. With a background in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Psychology, she is also the co-founder of Magnolia’s Counseling and Consultancy Services. Ms. Beckles is passionate about mental health advocacy and takes pride in mentoring students as they prepare for meaningful careers in social work.



Ms. Latoya Beckles



Mrs. Ornetta Waldron

Mrs. Ornetta Waldron recently joined the Department of Sociology, bringing over 25 years of community service experience. With a strong background in social work and education, she is passionate about inspiring young people and promoting mental well-being. Her commitment to empowerment, both inside and outside the classroom, continues to shape lives and strengthen the field of Social Work in Guyana.

A timely and thought-provoking session titled “*Preserving Mental Health While Providing Library Services*” was conducted by Mrs. Audrey Benn, Head of the Department of Sociology, along with Ms. Latoya Beckles and Ms. Ornetta Waldron, Lecturers in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Guyana. This session was attended by staff members of the University of Guyana Library and focused on the unique mental health challenges faced by library professionals in their day-to-day roles. The presenters highlighted the emotional demands of public service, the importance of setting healthy boundaries, and practical strategies for managing stress and burnout. Through an engaging and supportive dialogue, staff were encouraged to prioritize their well-being while continuing to provide quality service. The session fostered a deeper understanding of the need for self-care in the workplace and reaffirmed the value of empathy, mindfulness, and institutional support in maintaining a healthy work environment.

## Female Empowerment Session

Ms. Eraina Yaw, Head of Office at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Guyana and the Regional Coordination Office for the Caribbean, led a powerful and deeply moving Female Empowerment Session at the Education Lecture Theater, University of Guyana. Designed specifically for female library staff, the session tackled critical and often difficult topics such as domestic violence, abuse, rape, and the importance of walking away from toxic relationships. Ms. Yaw also explored the concept of “the different types of self,” encouraging participants to reflect on their self-worth, identity, emotional resilience, and personal growth. The session created a safe and supportive space for women to share, listen, and be empowered. It served as both an educational and healing experience, reminding attendees of the strength in vulnerability, the importance of self-awareness, and the right to live free from fear and harm.

# Library Appreciation Day- Celebrating Our Clients with Knowledge and Kindness

On April 11, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., the University of Guyana Library hosted Library Appreciation Day, a special event dedicated to honouring our clients for their continued support and engagement. The event featured a fun and interactive session where clients were invited to answer library-related questions, with small tokens of appreciation awarded for each correct response. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, filled with laughter, learning, and meaningful exchanges. This gesture was our way of saying thank you to the individuals who make our library community vibrant and inspiring. It was a morning of gratitude, engagement, and shared love for knowledge.

## National Library Week 2025, Activities





# We Are Here to Serve You

## Connect with Us!!!

|   |  |
|---|--|
|    | 592-222-4931   |
|    | 592-623-5819 Information Desk)<br>592-638-4432 (University Librarian)<br>592-642-7105 (Admin. Officer)                                   |
|   | <a href="mailto:rsd.library@uog.edu.gy">rsd.library@uog.edu.gy</a><br><a href="mailto:circulation@uog.edu.gy">circulation@uog.edu.gy</a> |
|  | University of Guyana Library<br>Turkeyen   |



Register Here or Visit the Library

↓

URL: <http://forms.gle/AryLVKzVREvp5qzU6>

**Compiled by: Ms. Bibi Shaniza Kalil, Assistant Librarian (Temp.)**

***bibi.kalil@uog.edu.gy***