



(photo Credit: Yale University)

Dr. Dahn, the Vice President for Health Sciences at the University of Liberia to commence a USAID funded project in collaboration with YALE University said

“Many donor-funded projects implement programming without building systems to install long-term institutional knowledge or capacity for independent initiatives within the host country institutions,” ...

“We have designed this project with systems-building and institutional sustainability at its core, and we are looking forward to the results.” University of Liberia College of Health Sciences (ULCHS) is the flagship public higher education institution responsible for training Liberia's clinicians, researchers, health policymakers, and innovators.

Led by Dr. Bernice Dahn, who spearheaded work to establish a resilient health system and fit-for-purpose health workforce during her tenures as Deputy Minister and Minister of Health of Liberia,

ULCHS is poised to become a globally recognized leader in research utilization, meaningfully connecting academics with policymaking, innovation, and clinical practice.

“We have built a mutually trusting partnership focused on fulfilling the vision and goals of our partners in Liberia, and we are excited to continue working together to establish permanent academic programs and robust administrative systems at ULCHS with this award,” explains Talbert-Slagle, associate director, Yale Institute for Global Health.

“With this approach, we can meet our collective goals of establishing permanent educational programs at ULCHS to enable current and future Liberian health workers, educators, and innovators to utilize research in their careers, with long-term positive impact on Liberia's health sector,” adds Talbert-Slagle.

CLINICAL TRIALS



The University of Liberia is part of a consortium aimed at conducting clinical trials to test the efficacy of a vaccine against Lassa Fever. Lassa Fever (LF) is a severe viral disease endemic in West African countries including Guinea, Liberia, Nigerian and Sierra Leone with approximately 300,000 LF cases and 5,000-10,000 deaths annually. These numbers are likely highly underestimated because of limited disease surveillance in some of the endemic countries.

The Lassa Fever Vaccine Efficacy and Prevention for West Africa (LEAP4WA) project will accelerate further development of the LF vaccine, which uses the same technology as Merck's ERVEBO® vaccine, through the conduct of an innovative safety and efficacy phase 2b trial. The trial will enroll adults and children from

communities in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

In Liberia, collaborative efforts by the University of Liberia (UL-PIRE) and the Partnership for Research on Vaccines and Infectious Diseases in Liberia (PREVAIL) in conjunction with the Liberian Ministry of Health (MOH) and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL), will access areas of Liberia that are in the 'LF belt', specifically Bong, Lofa and Nimba, through partnerships with local health facilities and the use of mobile teams. The project is being supported by funding from the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trial Partnership (EDCTP)

ULCOHS-UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN RESEARCH COLLABORATION



The ULCOHS is implementing a Maternal Health Project, led by the University of Michigan and in collaboration with Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, the Liberian Ministry of Health, and the Bong County Health team. The project is aimed at using the WhatsApp platform for referral of obstetrics emergencies. The platform will be used to implement an obstetric emergency triage system to reduce preventable, obstetric-related deaths.

The purpose of this research is to increase access to Cesarean Sections by decreasing referral time, improving obstetrics triage methods and decision making, and decreasing the Decision-to-Delivery (DDI) time. Preliminary data collection has already been collected that will be used to design data collection tools for the prospective study. The study is being sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

ULSOPH HEADS CONSORTIUM FOR ABORTION-RELATED RESEARCH IN LIBERIA

ULSOPH is heading a consortium of local and international researchers to map existing research skills, interests, and projects related to abortion specifically and reproductive health more generally in Liberia. The eight-month project, entitled “Strengthening Capacity and Catalyzing Change for Research and Communications Partners in LMICs”, is being driven by consortium members from the Guttmacher Institute (USA) and focal points from the National Public Health Institute of Liberia and the Institute for Population Studies, University of Liberia, under the leadership of Dr. Wahdae-Mai Harmon-Gray from ULSOPH.

To accomplish its objectives, the consortium has been locally recruiting for multiple positions, including a Project Manager and Research Assistants. Over the course of the project, a range of stakeholders will be engaged in an assessment of research skills and interests for capacity strengthening and a landscape map of abortion research in Liberia, with all activities intended to provide a roadmap for future, context-relevant research opportunities

HEALTH SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT (CHSLM) - EXECUTIVE PROGRAM



The University of Liberia (UL) in collaboration with the Yale University Health Management team of Liberia is delivering a 9 months innovative, executive-style Health Systems Leadership and management (CHSLM) program tailored for hospitals, healthcare administrators and managers. This CHSLM program focuses on developing critical leadership and management competencies necessary in a resilient and responsive health system as envisioned by the Liberian Ministry of Health. An experimental teaching method is utilized, including interactive lectures, facilitated discussions, team exercises, and applied quality improvement projects through which participants will develop and apply key leadership & management skills to address key system problems with evidence-based strategies, effective management and accountable governance in health facilities. The program has graduated three cohorts now with over 30 persons from both public and private health facilities in Liberia. Just ended cohort three and applications are out for cohort four.

ULSOPH RESEARCHERS AWARDED GRANT FROM THE SABIN VACCINE INSTITUTE

Associate Professor Laura Skrip and Dr. Wahdae-Mai Harmon- Gray were recently awarded a 12-month grant, entitled “Assessing Social, Demographic, and Clinical Drivers of COVID-19 Vaccination Behavior in post-Ebola Liberia,” from the Sabin Vaccine Institute under its Social and Behavioral Research Grants Program.

Drawing on the diverse content and methodological expertise of a multidisciplinary team of ULSOPH researchers, co-PIs Skrip and Harmon-Gray will conduct a mixed-methods study to investigate Liberians' experiences with COVID-19 vaccination and reasons behind their decisions to get vaccinated. They will work closely with the Ministry of Health's Expanded Programme under Mr. Adolphus Clarke to maximize the policy relevance of project activities and findings as the country works towards achieving higher vaccination coverage.

DEVELOPING NEW CAREER PATHWAYS IN QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Implemented in partnership with Q4D Lab, the Certificate Program in R Statistical Software and Biostatistics has successfully graduated nine students over two cohorts from “Beginner R for Public Health Practitioners and Researchers in Liberia” and three students from “Biostatistics I (with Intermediate R) for Public Health Practitioners and Researchers in Liberia.” Three students are currently enrolled in Biostatistics II (with Advanced R), which is the final course in the series. With funds generated from course fees, Q4D Lab and ULSOPH have jointly hired a Research Associate who will dedicate up to three days per week honing her statistical and mathematical modeling skills.



The program is committed to building quantitative research capacity and developing sustainable career pathways in Liberia. More details can be found at <https://www.q4dlab.org/r-coding-and-biostatistics> and <https://www.q4dlab.org/research>.

UL COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING HAD ITS INAUGURAL MENTORSHIP TRAINING.

Ten faculty members from ULCOHS were trained in a Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop and became facilitators to train the first Cohort of Certified Mentors of the College of Health Sciences. The facilitators comprised of faculty from the School of Public Health, the A. M. Dogliotti College of Medicine, and the School of Pharmacy. There were 23 participants of the first cohort, 10 were Teaching Assistants, who are future faculty of the College of Health Sciences that are undergoing training.

This was a four-day interactive training that was co-facilitated by the visiting Partners from the Vanderbilt university, Marie Martin and Troy Moon. The training was held from August 17 to August 20, 2021, in the auditorium of the A.

M. Dogliotti College of Medicine. The training was very beneficial to the facilitators and the participants. Upon completion, the facilitators along with the 23 participants were certificated.



UPDATE FOR THE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

ULCOHS had a Faculty Development Training of its Third Cohort. The training commenced in June and ended in August 2021. The facilitators from the Schools of Public Health and Pharmacy facilitated the training. The third cohort is the first independent cohort been trained by the facilitators from the College of Health Sciences. There were 21 participants trained and certificated. Participants included 11 faculty members from the College of Health Sciences (Schools of Public Health and Pharmacy, and College of Medicine) and 10 Teaching Assistants from the College of Health Sciences that are undergoing training to become full faculty members.

A closing program was held on August 27, the last day of the training. The program was graced with the presence of USAID representative, Ms. Shelly Wright, the Vice President of the College of Health Sciences, Dr. Bernice T. Dahn, visiting facilitator and mentor from the Vanderbilt University, Dr. Marie Martin, and the Coordinator for the Teaching and Learning Center, Dr. Odell W. Kumeh.



SCHOOL OF PHARMACY



INAUGURAL DOCTOR OF PHARMACY GRADUATION TO BE HAD DURING THE 102ND COMMENCEMENT CONVOCATION.

After the approval of the West Africa Health Organization-Harmonized Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) Curriculum in 2019 by the University of Liberia Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees, the School of Pharmacy launched the implementation of the program. The transition from regular Bachelor of Pharmacy program to Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum with current students will not allow the regular graduation of class during the annual convocation exercises. The shift from contemporary Bachelor of Pharmacy program will cause the current final year students to do two semesters' courses that will enable them to qualify for graduation during the 103rd commencement convocation. Instead, the faculty members who are undergoing the Special, expedited conversion are the only candidates to be graduated. The 102nd commencement convocation will witness the inaugural graduation of students with the Doctor of Pharmacy Degree from the School of Pharmacy the University of Liberia. The 14 faculty members are assiduously working on their courses in order to meet up with the time of clearance for graduation.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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