

Guest editorial

THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES: LOOKING AHEAD

Roberta Sammut

Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

The last Editorial by Professor Angela A. Xuereb Anastasi, in Volume 4, Issue 1 of this journal, provided a summary of the achievement the Faculty of Health Sciences has obtained over the past seven years. As Professor Xuereb Anastasi moves on to her well-earned sabbatical, I thank her on behalf all members of staff for the achievements of the Faculty under her leadership over these years.

As I now take up the baton from her as Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, I know that I have stable ground to work on, and I look to the future with optimism and enthusiasm to continue to see the Faculty grow and mature.

Where do I envision the Faculty will go over the next four years?

Firstly, I would like to see greater collaboration between the Departments within the Faculty and greater openness of the Faculty to work with other Faculties, both teaching and research. This should provide the possibility of new ideas being created, bringing a breath of fresh air, which is not possible if we maintain a 'silo' mentality.

To achieve this, we must communicate better with each other, with other Faculties and with society at large. Amongst other possible ways to achieve this, is the effective use of social media. The Faculty has already established a Facebook and Twitter page, which we invite you to follow, where we can share what is going on inside our walls with other

staff members within the University, practitioners, many of whom are our alumni, and the general public. Secondly, I see a Faculty where the voice of every stakeholder is heard, that is the academics, the administrators, the students and the persons who we serve and care for.

The educational and health care context within which we are used to working is changing. Other higher education entities are offering programmes of studies which parallel those offered by the Faculty of Health Sciences. Local health care entities are increasingly being privatised. These observations suggest that the Faculty needs to adapt in response to these changes if it is to retain its position of excellence as the primary education provider for health care professionals on the island. To do this we must ensure that the programmes offered are sustainable over the years and that we have the tools and methods to ensure that sustainability.

Above all, my vision for the Faculty is that it provides a voice within society, guiding the development of health care policy to assure that the services provided are based on the latest available evidence, obtained through a strong research framework. This should ensure the value of the Faculty of Health Sciences for Maltese society. The years ahead are very promising and exciting, and I am sure my colleagues are as excited as I am. I hope that over these four years, the Faculty will continue to grow in its value for our country.