

Remarks
Ambassador D. Brent Hardt
Launch of American Spots
Thursday, February 14, 2013, 10:00 a.m.
at the University of Guyana, Georgetown

UG Vice Chancellor Dr. Jacob Opadeyi,
Deputy Librarian Debra Lowe,
University Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Members of the Media,

Good morning everyone. Yesterday, I paid a visit to the National Library, where we launched an American Spot. Today, I am pleased to be here at the Library of the University of Guyana to launch the second of our two *American Spots*. Our presence here will add to the University's wonderful collection, and set up a specially dedicated shelf, featuring books, resources, and other information on the United States. We hope that this initiative will support the UG Library's mission to serve the University and the community at large as the beacon of academic research, both locally and internationally.

U.S. Embassies abroad are uniquely positioned to reach out directly to foreign citizens to share aspects of American culture. Our *American Spots* exemplify the U.S. commitment to a core tenet of democracy: a citizen's right to free access to information. Hosted at two partner institutions, the National Library

of Guyana and the University of Guyana Library, it is our hope that these two *American Spots* will provide welcoming environments where visitors can connect and learn more about the United States.

Our *American Spots* will provide access to the latest, in-depth information about the United States, connecting Americans and Guyanese citizens in discussions on U.S. policy, society, and values. The Spots will feature a diverse collection of books and booklets, including resources about the United States and books by American authors. We have books on the National Parks of America, on notable American leaders, on U.S. history and government, and Native American culture.

Our *American Spots* also offer resources to assist young people is pursuing university studies in the U.S., including guide books on selecting a college or university, how to apply to universities, how to apply for scholarships, how to write college application essays, and degree options available. We intend to have a strong *EducationUSA* presence at both libraries as part of our *American Spots* initiative. Previously, these books were located within the Embassy and were not easily accessible. Now, prospective students can come here and browse the collection on their own time. The Embassy plans to host *EducationUSA* advising

sessions to provide prospective students additional guidance on how to use these resources and materials and to share other strategies to further their education and development.

EducationUSA and our advising for prospective students is one of our priorities at the Embassy – and one of our country's priorities in the Western Hemisphere. In March 2011, President Obama launched “*100,000 Strong in the Americas*,” an initiative to increase international study in Latin America and the Caribbean. The purpose of *100,000 Strong* is to foster region-wide prosperity through greater international exchange of students, who are our future leaders and innovators. Increasing mutual understanding within the Western Hemisphere and building closer people-to-people ties, the President believes, will help the people of the Hemisphere to work together more closely to address common challenges, including citizen security, economic opportunity, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

The United States is eager to welcome Guyanese students to our universities. The importance of international educational exchange in promoting understanding across national, cultural, religious, and racial borders really should never be underestimated. Hundreds of thousands of students who study overseas each year

help to create a global citizenry that is culturally aware and respectful of people from different backgrounds, and can help to build the close, interpersonal connections that will solve scientific problems, meet social challenges, and develop new forms of creative, artistic expression.

Students who participate in international study draw lifetime benefits from the opportunity to learn a discipline in a different cultural context, to be immersed in and learn from another culture, and to share one's culture with others. Overseas academic development also delivers a high rate of return for sending countries; university graduates are ultimately able to use their newly-gained skills to make valuable contributions to the development of their own societies. We want to do our part by providing useful information and resources to prospective students who are interested in learning more about U.S. colleges and the application processes for study in the United States. Our *American Spots* will help us to achieve this goal.

The United States via the U.S. Embassy in Guyana already shares a special relationship with the University of Guyana. We have collaborated on a number of mutually beneficial projects. USAID has supported a Higher Education for Development partnership from 2009 to 2011 between Ohio University and

University of Guyana for media development in Guyana. The partnership focused on enhancing and upgrading the delivery of mass communication and journalism education at UG, upgrading the education, skills and experience of UG faculty, and upgrading the education, skills and experience of Guyanese journalists and other media professionals. We also have an Ohio University Medical School team visiting the University of Guyana this week to explore and establish relations between the University of Guyana's Faculty of Health Sciences and Guyana's Ministry of Health.

Only last month, the Embassy, through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, launched a vitally important partnership – the Masters in Internal Medicine and Infectious Disease Residency Program between the University of Maryland, the University of Guyana, the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, and the Ministry of Health that established a three-year residency program in internal medicine and infectious diseases.

The Embassy has also partnered with the University to engage students through speaker programs and other thematic presentations, including a Journalism Speaker and training, viewing parties for the State of the Union Address and for

President's Day, and volunteer work with the EcoTrust Society for our *Guyana Shines* environmental awareness project.

We realize that these two *American Spots* featuring books and booklets on the United States represent a beginning. Nevertheless, we would like to use these *Spots* to host speakers and events sponsored by the Embassy for the benefit of the public. We anticipate cultural events, informational events, alumni gatherings, and more. We hope that our presence at both the National Library and the University of Guyana will help forge an even closer relationship with both of these educational institutions. As more people make use of this resource, we look forward to expanding the *Spots* and adding more resources to these spaces, to include collections of electronic journals, e-books, and multimedia materials.

So, without further delay, I am pleased to officially open our *American Spot* at the University of Guyana Library. We hope that this *American Spot* will enable us to build and strengthen relationships, showcase American culture and values, encourage study in the United States, and foster goodwill and dialogue between the United States and the people of Guyana.

Thank you.