

Professor wants Guyana to set up special ministry for employment, training

By **OiINOW** | March 27, 2021 |  0



Preparing a qualified workforce is the essential function of Guyana’s educational system says Dr. Terrence Richard Blackman, an associate professor of mathematics, and a founding member of the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics at Medgar Evers College.

In his most recent column [published on OilNOW](#) this week, Professor Blackman said tomorrow’s careers, particularly those in the emerging oil and gas sector, will require advanced skills and more flexibility than ever.

“Guyana’s workforce development policies must facilitate industry-driven training and educational programs focused on providing Guyanese youth, Guyanese women, and the Guyanese in rural areas preparation for Guyanese jobs,” he said.

Guyana's economy grew by some 43.5 percent in 2020 – the fastest in the world – since becoming an oil producing nation at the end of 2019.

Increased economic activities in the South American nation will give rise to more employment and investment opportunities which Guyanese, once prepared, can benefit immensely from.

Dr. Blackman said the majority of Guyanese employment are in agriculture, forestry, fishing, wholesale and retail trade, and the public administration and defense sectors.

In order to meet its workforce needs, he said Guyana should adopt a three-tier approach. This would include amplifying and refining existing Secondary School programs that connect youth with career pathways and help them prepare for the academic and other rigors that lead to workforce participation. He is also advocating for the development of **academic certificate and degree programs** that prepare students, with particular emphasis on women, for careers in critical Guyanese employment sectors; and prioritizing **professional development courses** that provide continuing education targeted at rural youth and women.

“We must be purposeful as we identify workforce development priorities through labor market information, institutional data, and industry feedback to support and develop programs countrywide,” Dr. Blackman said, adding that to this end, “is useful to consider, a la Alaska, the establishment of a Ministry of Employment and Training Services (METS)...”

This ministry, he said, will work with business and industry, particularly the emerging oil and gas sector, to build a trained and prepared workforce by providing employment and training services to Guyanese and Guyanese businesses, thereby advancing opportunities for employment and economic stability for communities in Guyana.

“A Ministry of Employment and Training Services (METS) would, for

example, operate a countrywide online labor exchange system that would connect job seekers and employers in each of the 10 regions,” he pointed out.

It would oversee and administer job centers across the country to assist job seekers with employment related services. It would support employers by providing outreach and recruitment services and providing information on pathways to employment for the general public.

He said such a ministry could provide the specialized initiatives aimed at integrating women, rural youth, indigenous populations, into the economic mainstream of Guyana. It would be charged with developing approaches flexible enough to respond to emerging industries, identify solutions for workforce issues on an ongoing basis, and meet the needs of employers, communities, and the nation.

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