



# Sri Lankan Medical & Dental Association in the UK

## *Supporting Medical & Dental Education in Sri Lanka*

### Report on the Book Donation Programme

#### **Introduction**

This is one of the signature programmes of the SLMDA UK, the other being the Student Bursary Scheme. There have been other programmes and projects from time to time but these two have been the regular and the longest running.

#### **The process**

A memo was sent to the librarians of the faculties shortly after the AGM in May 2017 requesting them to submit book lists to the value of £1300 within 30 days. Some faculties were very prompt but others needed several reminders. The lists submitted were reviewed carefully to ensure compliance with the set criteria. Please see below.

There was one complication last year: after the memo had been sent, the SLMDA Council decided that those faculties which received project grants would not be eligible to receive book donations in the same year. The three faculties affected by this decision were the Dental, Jaffna and Rajarata faculties. As it happened, Dental Faculty had submitted its list within days of the memo. I did not have the heart to inform the Dental Faculty that books would not be donated in 2017. Therefore, I paid for the books instead of the SLMDA. Jaffna and Rajarata faculties were very disappointed not to receive the books but there was little I could do for them. I suggest that such policy decisions are implemented from the subsequent year to ensure that adequate notice of change is given to the affected parties.

#### **Book selection criteria**

These are simple: the books must be primarily for undergraduate use; the each list must cover as many disciplines as possible; the titles must be the most useful to a wider readership and they must be contemporary. However, some faculties ignored the criteria and requested expensive reference titles for use by the staff, outdated books or out of print titles. Such texts were substituted with more suitable ones.

#### **Ordering and delivery**

This took about six months due mainly to requests for books published in the US which took longer to procure. If a book was not available, the faculties were given an opportunity to submit alternative titles. Our policy is to supply books to all the faculties simultaneously to ensure fairness. Therefore, speedy purchase was essential. The books were delivered to all the faculties by the end of December 2017 by the supplier, Mediline Books.

Some librarians were slow to acknowledge the receipt of books. This was most unfortunate. Only after all the faculties had confirmed the receipt of books that the final payment was made to the supplier.

#### **Concluding remarks**

SLMDA has donated books for more than 20 years without interruption. The recipient faculties state that this remains the biggest source of funding for much needed books. The Book Donations remain one of the most valued programmes of the Association's charitable activities.

*D/D Samarawickrama*

Co-ordinator  
Book Donation Scheme

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