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**Meeting with Prof Anthony Warrens (Dean for Education at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry) & Christine Sofianos - Director of Operations, Bart's Medical School with the MMSA Executive Board.**

Date: Friday 30th October 2015

Time: 4:00pm - 6.30pm

Prof. Warrens started off the meeting by outlining the fundamental things that come part and parcel with Bart's Medical School:

Firstly, the first class will commence in 2017 and hence the first clinical attachments will be taking place in 2019 (*when the students will be in their third year*). The course is similar to the one at the Maltese medical school since it is a 5 year course. It is estimated that 60 students are to be admitted every year. The first 2 years are pre-clinical years and the remaining 3 years are clinical where the student will be attached to various consultants depending on the topic at the time. During the clinical years, the students will be given one week of theory teaching with lectures and that will be followed by 4 weeks hands on bedside teaching in the wards. It was emphasized that the students will have several clinical attachments in health centres, in collaboration with the General Practitioners. After the 5 years, Bart's students will be offered the chance to apply for a post for a 1 year foundation programme at Mater Dei Hospital, as discussed with the Malta Foundation Programme, (with the possibility of doing an extra year if requested by the student).

It was also discussed that the number of consultants should increase, as was discussed with the Ministry in order to reduce any competition for Barts' Students with the Maltese students. However the exact agreement was signed through a contract with Government and hence Prof Anthony Warrens was not able to give us details about this issue.

During the attachment periods with consultant, Barts students will be divided into groups of 3-5 students attached per consultant. Even though Prof. Warrens claimed that the number of consultants should increase and hence there can be more distribution, he also said that they had no control if there was to be overlap with the Maltese Medical School Students.

Prof. Warrens is in discussion with a number of Clinical Heads & Consultants including Mark Brincat, Yves Muscat Baron, Mark Formosa, Kevin Cassar, Joe Debono, Tony Piscopo, Soler, Stephen Fava, Robert Xuereb, Stefan Laspina, Joseph Zarb Adami.

Prof. Warrens explained that there will be extensive refurbishment of the Gozo General Hospital and St.Luke's Hospital, and through this he believes that there will be more opportunities for Bart's students to distribute themselves thus reducing the burden on Mater Dei. He also added that Barts' students will also be having clinical attachments in the new Life Sciences building too. He explained that additionally there will also be reconfiguration of



services between the hospitals. However the issue arises when it comes to specific specialities that are only provided at Mater Dei Hospital. The exact logistics of this procedure have not yet been established, but it is certain that the Barts' students will have placements at Mater Dei for some specialties, especially in their fourth year of study.

According to Prof Anthony Warrens the current statistics show that there is enough capacity in Mater Dei to cater for the learning of 200 students per year which was guaranteed by the government. This is why he predicts that an average of 140 Maltese students and 60 Barts' students from each year should not cause a problem with overcrowding.

He encouraged the building of a strong relationship between the students from both schools. He believes in future collaboration specifically a Research Collaboration. There are a lot of potential topics that can be addressed including medical genetics. A series of seminars will be organised where Maltese scientists can exchange material with scientists coming from London. He added in fact that the first seminar would be discussing Oncology, and will take place on the 23rd of November, this is to be chaired by Profs. LaFerla, the dean of the Maltese Medical School.

We enquired about the fact that as students, we worry that some of our esteemed lecturers will be offered better working conditions and better pays at Bart's (since they have more cash flow when compared to the Maltese Medical School) and hence would prefer to work there. Prof. Warrens explained that this should not be a problem since he emphasised that the two pre-clinical years will be taught by lecturers appointed by Bart's and brought from London, while the consultants that will be teaching the clinical students will be paid the same fees as they are paid to teach as part of the Maltese medical school. They also said that they will not issue the pays to the consultants themselves but that they will pass on the government, who will redistribute the money accordingly. However, as mentioned before, supposedly, the consultants will be paid a fixed wage and there will be no distinction between a Barts Student and a UOM Medical student. However it's important to note that this decision is in the hands of the Maltese Government and not Barts Medical School hence this should be clarified with local entities.

After asking about the entry requirements of the course, it was explained that the requirements will be exactly like those back in London, that is; three As or better in 3 A Levels. However, the system is two-part; students get a set amount of points for an interview and another set of points for their marks and a global score is taken. Additionally, students with a 2.1 degree can also enter the course.

When asked about the Foundation Programme it was explained that the Bart's students can apply to be foundation doctors in Malta however they will have to follow the exact same application process currently followed by the Maltese students and students applying from



abroad. After discussing with Prof Kevin Cassar and Mr. Tony Piscopo, it was decided that there will be an extra 40 places offered to accommodate any Barts' medical students who would be willing to remain in Malta at the end of their course for their one year foundation programme.

When confronted with the language barrier issue, it seemed that this was not a pressing issue for Prof. Warrens since the administration was thinking of appointing people as translators, to help make the clinical picture easier for students. This System has not been thought through or established till now.

When asked about the administration of Bart's and how they will work on increasing medical tourism, we were told that this was not their job but once again this is subcontracted by a separate entity with the government. As far as they're concerned, they signed a contract with government to lease the hospital which needs to be respected. Therefore the government has another separate private contract that takes care of the actual building of the hospital.

Given, that Bart's medical students have their own students organisation, we were concerned about the creation of a separate medical student organization. We were informed that in fact they will bring their student organization to the Maltese islands. Prof. Warrens encouraged a strong relationship between us through sporting activities such as football tournaments and activities of the sort, which could even be funded by the Barts' Medical School. As a matter of fact, they want to fly in their president from the UK so he could meet the MMSA Board in the coming days, however we did not give an answer as to whether we are willing to take on the offer yet. We were also advised that the administration of Barts had already met up with Denis Muscat, the President of GUG to discuss organising various leisure activities for the Barts students residing in Gozo.

The examination sessions for Barts students will commence in May and June until July for 1st-4th years while those of 5th years take place in March. The students will also have regular assessments throughout the rest of the year.

Prof Warrens explained that he wants a committee to be set-up between the administration of Barts and the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery (UOM) where they sit together to plan the clinical attachments in order to make sure to avoid or minimize the overlap between us and ensure maximal efficiency and smooth running of attachments especially for the 4th and 5th years that will be concentrated at Mater Dei. This committee will meet at least once a month to look for mutual opportunities and ways to minimise any conflict, be it logistical or academical. Prof Warrens also added that he did not meet the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery yet.

Prof Warrens also explained that he could work for UOM students to be given preference and to reduce any financial administration fees should they decide to do an elective with the Barts Medical School in London.



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They added that they are willing to respond to any questions that might come up in the coming days, in order to clarify the picture further on the Barts Medical School.

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