

APPLICANT CRITERIA

- US citizenship with a current passport
- Proficiency in college-level science

A minimum of:

- One year of biology
- One year of inorganic chemistry with lab
- One year of organic chemistry with lab
- One year of physics
- Committed to practice medicine in poor and medically underserved communities in the US after graduation.
- Under 30 years old
- **Persons of color and/or low income are especially encouraged to apply.**

The IFCO Medical School Scholarship Committee reviews applications. However, all final decisions regarding admission are made in Cuba.



What we want from the Latin American School of Medicine is for students from our sister nations to become imbued with the same doctrine in which our own doctors are educated, with that total devotion to their noble future profession— for the doctor is like a shepherd, a priest, a missionary, a crusader for the people's health and physical and mental well-being.

Cuban President Fidel Castro



**For applications
or more information contact:**

**Interreligious Foundation
for Community Organization**

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web site: www.ifconews.org

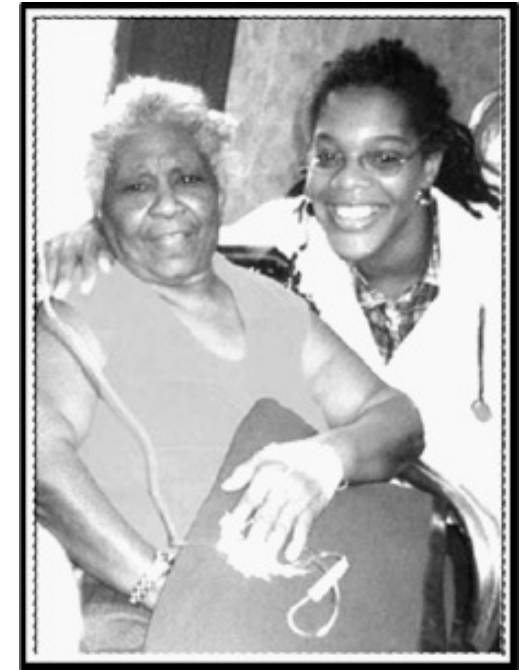
email: ifco@igc.org

IFCO was founded in 1967 to advance the struggles of oppressed people for justice and self-determination. For over three decades, IFCO has worked with its international church partners and a network of grassroots organizations to assist the disenfranchised to develop and sustain community organizations to fight injustice. This work includes education about the realities of the poor in the US and the "third world."

Since 1992, IFCO has worked to bring an end to the immoral and unjust US economic blockade of Cuba, has delivered humanitarian aid to the Cuban people through our Friendship Caravans, and has organized construction brigades, educational delegations and other exchanges.

Through our project Pastors for Peace, IFCO carries out similar work in Chiapas, Mexico; Nicaragua and Honduras. IFCO also provides support for grassroots community organizing projects in urban and rural regions of the US.

Updated November 1, 2007



Medical School Scholarship Program

Latin American School of Medicine HAVANA, CUBA

BACKGROUND

During a Congressional Black Caucus delegation to Cuba in June 2000, a Congressperson from the Mississippi Delta remarked to President Fidel Castro that there are large areas in his district which do not have a single physician. President Castro responded with an offer of full scholarships for young adults from Mississippi to study medicine in Cuba.

This generous offer was then extended to young adults of color from low income, working class and underserved areas throughout the US.

In his September 2001 speech at the Riverside Church in New York, President Castro said, "We are prepared to grant a number of scholarships to poor youth who cannot afford to pay the \$200,000 it costs to get a medical degree in the United States."

The intent of this scholarship offer is to help the US fill the dramatic need for health care in some of its most medically neglected and impoverished regions. These full scholarships for young adults to study medicine in Cuba cover tuition, room and board, plus textbooks in Spanish.

The only condition of Cuba's offer is that graduates of the program return to the US to practice in underserved communities.

This scholarship offer is a historically unprecedented opportunity. Accordingly, IFCO seeks to make this opportunity available to its members and colleagues. Recruitment for the program began in 2001.



Health Care in Cuba is Universal and Free

Cuba makes health care a priority for its citizens, despite the effects of the suffocating US blockade. Cuba's public health care system is world-renowned. It maintains one physician for every 168 people in the country, and produces 2000 new physicians every year.

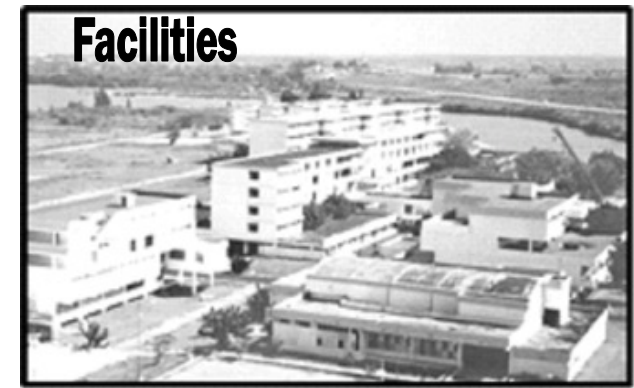
The infant mortality rate is less than that of the US. The Cuban Ministry of Health maintains a clinic, with at least one doctor and one nurse in residence, for every 120 families in Cuba.

Cuba: Health Care for the World Free of Charge

- ◆ Cuba sends thousands of physicians and medical professionals to serve in the poorest areas of Latin America and Africa
- ◆ Cuba is organizing a health care task force to address the AIDS epidemic in Africa and is building two medical schools in South Africa
- ◆ Cuba has treated over 18,000 Chernobyl nuclear disaster victims
- ◆ Cuba has trained hundreds of doctors from African and Latin American nations, who return to practice medicine in their countries

◆ all free of charge

Now Cuba is reaching out to "third world" regions of the US, to train US physicians for cities, reservations and rural areas where medical services are desperately needed.



Facilities

The Latin American School of Medicine is located on the site of a former naval academy. The campus has 28 buildings, which house 80 classrooms, 37 laboratories, five amphitheaters, dormitories, an infirmary, and other facilities. LASM currently has more than 8,000 students enrolled from 24 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the United States. Extra-curricular activities include music, dance, film, volley ball, basketball and soccer. There are also "Culture House" activities in which the students present performances and programs to share aspects of their own cultures.

Program overview

All courses at the LASM are taught in Spanish. The pre-med curriculum includes introductory courses in health sciences, chemistry, biology, math, physics and a 12-week intensive Spanish language program.

The six-year program includes a one year rotating internship, beginning every September. Students are at the LASM campus for the first two years and then attend another of Cuba's 22 medical schools, which are connected to hospitals and polyclinics. The training model combines theory with practice and focuses on primary care, community medicine, and hands-on internships. The LASM program provides intensive advising and tutoring designed to help every student succeed. Students must pass competency exams at appropriate points in their course of study. For US students this includes the United States Medical Licensing Exams (USMLE).