

APPLICANT CRITERIA

US citizenship with a current passport

Proficiency in college-level sciences

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 United States 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.



For applications

or more information contact:

**Interreligious Foundation
for Community Organization**

402 West 145th Street, New York, NY 10031

tel: 212. 926.5757 fax: 212.926.5842

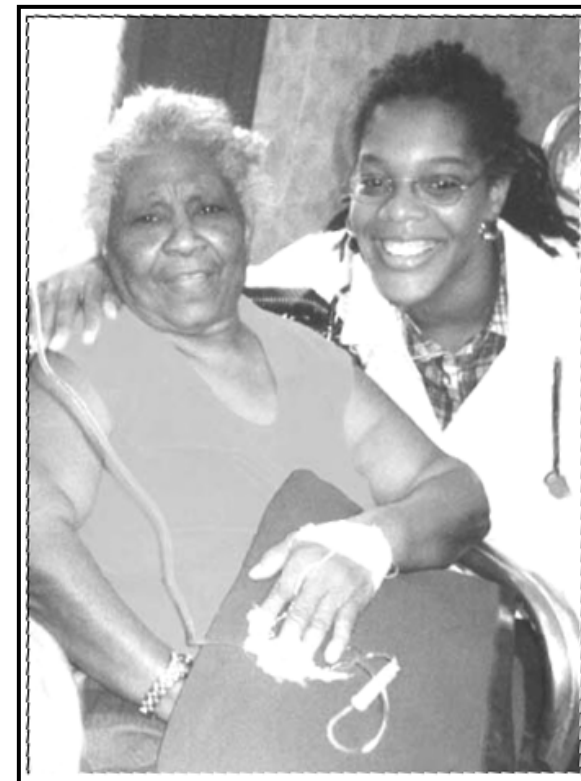
email: lasm@igc.org

web site: www.ifconews.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, and 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.



The Latin American
School of Medicine

MEDICAL SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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, dormitory room and board, plus textbooks in Spanish.

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

IFCO views this scholarship offer as a historically unprecedented opportunity. Accordingly, IFCO seeks to make this opportunity available to its members and colleagues. We began recruitment for the scholarship program in 2001.

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

HEALTH CARE IN CUBA IS UNIVERSAL AND FREE

Cuba continues to make 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 United States. 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 PROVIDES HEALTH CARE FOR THE WORLD

- ◆ 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
- ◆ Cuba is building two medical schools in South Africa
- ◆ Cuba has treated more than 18,000 victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster
- ◆ 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 amphitheatres, dormitories, an infirmary, and other facilities. The LASM currently has more than 8000 students enrolled from 24 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the United States. Extracurricular activities include music, dance, film, volleyball, basketball and soccer. There are also "Culture House" activities in which the students (who represent dozens of different ethnicities) present performances and programs sharing aspects of their cultures.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

All courses at the LASM are taught in Spanish. The pre-med curriculum includes an introductory course in health sciences as well as courses in chemistry, biology, math, physics and a 12-week intensive Spanish language program. The six-year medical school program, which includes a one year rotating internship, begins every September. Students study at the LASM campus for the first two years, attend another of Cuba's 22 medical schools, which are connected to hospitals and policlinics. The Cuban medical training model combines theory with practice and focuses on primary care, community medicine, and hands-on internships.

The program at LASM 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).