

Independence Through Young Eyes: What University Students Think About Guyana at 60th



By Abbez Anthony

On May 26, 2026 Guyana marked 60 years of its freedom which is the it's been a span of six decades since the country broke free from the British colonial rule. Since achieving independence in 1966 Guyana has seen great political, social, and economic transformations. Today we see a new generation of Guyanese which grew up in a independent nation and which they face a different set of opportunities and challenges than what past generations did.

As the world continues to develop which we see in the large scale economic growth that the oil and gas sector is bringing us into, issues come up regarding what young people think of

independence and national identity. To look into these issues we conducted interviews at the University of Guyana with students from various academic fields.

For most students independence means freedom, national pride, and the right of the Guyanese people to chart their own course.

Twenty year old Education student Sarah Persaud reported that independence is a symbol of national achievement.

“For me Independence Day is a time to reflect on how far Guyana has come as a country. It is a chance to see that we do indeed have our own identity and culture and that we as a people are charged with the task of shaping our nation’s future.”

Also in the case of Kevin Thomas who is a Social Sciences student he reported that while independence is a value which still does which still plays a role, today’s issues have greater appeal to many young people.

“I do think that independence is a value we should hold onto but at the same time many young people are more focused on present issues like jobs, education, and the cost of living. Also we celebrate Independence Day sometimes without really knowing what it is we are celebrating.”

These reports indicate that while students are aware of the importance of independence they tend to associate it with present issues as opposed to past struggles.

Students reported out on what which they are proud to be from Guyana.

Among what we saw time and again were issues of cultural diversity, natural resources, environment which is very rich in resources, and a growing economy.

Business student Alicia Roberts reported on Guyana’s growing international recognition.

“I am very proud to see us gain that which we did in the international stage, in particular with the growth of our oil sector. We are on the map in a big way and we have many more opportunities at present.”

Others reported on improvements in education, infrastructure and technology. Students also noted that Guyana has seen great progress since independence and that which it has yet to achieve is also great.

Although we are optimistic about what the future holds for the country, students also brought up a number of present issues that worry them.

Environmental Studies student Michael Adams noted: Environmental Studies' student Michael Adams noted:.

“Although we are still in the process of development as a country we see issues like poverty, crime, traffic, and high cost of living. I believe development should include all of us and not just a few.”

The interviews showed a range of views on what young people know of Guyana’s past.

Medical Science student Andrea Singh reports that history education is a area which needs to improve.

“I see that we cover the fundamentals in school, what we also need to do is pay better attention to our own country’s history like that of Guyana and important national issues while we do learn about independence which is a big deal, not all aspects of what led up to it and what came after are as well known.”

Several which put time into it at school reported to have learned the most about independence there as opposed to in depth study.

This has that while we are aware of the issue, we may have to put in greater effort to improve historical knowledge among younger generations.

Students put forth the issue of youth participation in national development.

Communication Studies student Daniel Fraser reports that young people do their part in bettering society.

“Young people must put into action in their communities, do well in their studies, and use their talents to better Guyana’s future. Independence is the call to create a better tomorrow.”

Many of our students also report an interest in entrepreneurship, innovation, environmental sustainability, and civic engagement as a way to see national progress.



According to a University of Guyana professor that we spoke to for this project independence is very much a relevant issue which is in fact a matter of the nation’s right to run its own affairs.

The professor reported that study of the past’s impact on present day issues which young people today put into perspective the past’s struggles which in turn better prepares them for today’s issues. The Lecturer also reported that for the country to develop we see the role of the citizen very much so, in which we include the youth that will in time take up leadership roles.

When put that question to them most students reported optimism.

Law student Rachel Grant put forth what many of the participants thought.

My appeal is to all Guyanese to put aside our differences. We must unite if we are to see our country grow and to present to the next generation better opportunities.

Students reported that the large scale which Guyana has is a fact but at the same time they put forth that for the country to do well in the long term we must see good governance, national unity and also a great investment in education.

Six decades post independence Guyanese university students still value freedom, national identity, and what independence has brought. Although they celebrate what the country has achieved they also note the issues which still exist.

Their views present a picture of a generation which is proud of its country but also anxious for improvement in education, employment, social equality, and national development.

As we enter the 70th year of Guyana's independence young people's voices present what has been achieved and what is to come. For this generation independence is not just a mark in history but also a responsibility to help mold our nation's future.