



COBEC Winter 2014 Conference - February 6 & 7, 2014  
 Venue: Coconut Palm Room, Pelican Beach Resort  
**Theme: Celebrating Collaborations: Past, Present, and Future**  
 Hosted by: Stann Creek Ecumenical Junior College, Dangriga, Belize.

**Participants Present on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2014 (\* indicates attendance on Feb 7)**

Names	Institutions	Names	Institutions
Adamson, Nancy	SUNY, Cortland	Dellow, Donald	University of South Florida
Adey, Anthony	Memorial University	Ellis, Gustavo	San Pedro Junior College
Aird, Eve*	Sacred Heart Junior College	Emke, Ivan	Memorial University
Armstrong, Brenda*	Ministry of Education	Emmons, Patricia*	Bridgewater State University
Armstrong, Kirk*	Georgia College & State University	Fenters, Brittany*	Murray State University
Arnold, Michelle*	Toucan Education Programs Ltd	Finazzo, Susan*	Georgia Perimeter College
Avila, Raul*	Galen University	Flinchum, Betty*	University of North Florida (Emeritus)
Bennett, Jane*	University of West Indies	Frierson, Henry	University of Florida
Boles, Ed*	New Mexico State University	Frost, Guy	Valdosta State University
Bradshaw, Geoff*	Madison College	Gebhardt, Gonda*	SUNY, Cortland
Brennan, Michael	Hillsborough Community College	Gerber, Brian*	Valdosta State University
Call, Dwight*	Emeritus (Georgia College and State University)	Gilhary, Froylan*	San Pedro Junior College
Carvajal, Richard*	Bainbridge State College	Gonzalez, Hugo*	Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College
Castillo, Leolyn	University of Belize	Goodrich, Darlene*	Hillsborough Community College
Castillo, Lusiola*	Belize National Library Service	Gutierrez, Ruth Galvez	Cubola Productions
Catapano, Susan	University of North Carolina at Wilmington	Hernandez, Ethel*	University of Belize
Clarke, Joel*	Belize Adventist Junior College	Higginson, Bonnie*	Murray State University
Davis, Deborah*	Valdosta State University	Hodge, Emilia*	University of Florida
Delgado, Tanya*	University of South Florida	Hodge, Warren*	University of North Florida
Hunt, Kevin*	Georgia College & State University	Kemppainen, John*	University of North Florida
Robateau, Ewart	University of Belize	Kilburn, Vanessa*	Toucan Ridge Ecology and Education Society

Rodovski, Monica*	Toucan Ridge Ecology and Education Society	Leiva, Adrian*	Muffles Junior College
Satchwell, Deryck*	Ministry of Education	Lopez, Priscilla Brown	University of Belize
Saunders, Sharmayne*	University of the West Indies (Open Campus, Belize)	Magana, Fermin*	Sacred Heart Junior College
Shoemaker, Joel*	Madison College	Mai, Alfredo	Sacred Heart Junior College
Sosa-Moguel, Luana*	Ministry of Education	Mai, Jose*	Corozal Junior College
Stuivenberg, Arnold van*	Stann Creek Ecumenical Junior College	Martinez, Karen*	Stann Creek Ecumenical Junior College
Thompson, Cynthia*	University of Belize	McCrillis, Neil*	Columbus State University
Vellos, Ravey*	Corozal Junior College	McElwaine, Marilyn*	University of Indianapolis
Yearwood, Sharrett	University of Belize	McKee, Meredith*	University of Arkansas
Young, Marie Scott*	Independence Junior College	Mirandy, William*	Kennesaw State University
Ysaguirre, Joy*	Belize National Library Service	Miser, Ann*	(Guest)University of Hawaii at Hilo
Munoz, Linda	Memorial University	Miser, Keith*	(Emeritus) University of Hawaii at Hilo
Nikolov, Ivan*	Valdosta State University	Montero, Miguel	Corozal Junior College
Ostroth, David*	Bridgewater State University	Palacio, Vincent	University of Belize

## 1.0 OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

The official Opening Ceremony commenced at 9:34 a.m. The Directors of the event were Mrs. Shanna Taylor and Ms Florence Cayetano, Business lecturers at Ecumenical Junior College (EJC). The programme started with the National Anthem which was led by the Ecumenical College Choir and Mr. Adrian Martinez. Rev. Fred Francisco, Social Science Lecturer at Ecumenical Junior College gave the prayer.

### 1.1 WELCOME

**Mrs. Jane Bennett, Head of the UWI Open Campus, Belize and Belize Co-Chair of COBEC**, welcomed all the delegates to the Conference. She congratulated Dr. Karen Martinez, her team and the Dangriga community for assisting in organizing the Conference and noted that she looked forward to rich exchanges among COBEC members over the two days. **Dr. John Kempainen, UNF and US Co-Chair of COBEC**, welcomed the delegates and thanked Valdosta for hosting the last conference. He applauded the librarian team who did a wonderful job at the pre-Conference workshop indicating that these initiatives were the reasons why COBEC existed. **Mr. Gasper Martinez, Chairman Board of Governor Ecumenical Junior College**, also welcomed all the delegates and thanked the Dean and her able staff for their great work in organizing the Conference.

### 1.2 OPENING REMARKS

**Honorable Patrick Faber, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports** asked all participants to salute outstanding COBEC members and applauded the COBEC organization. He asked everyone to continue to work together to build the education system in Belize and mentioned that the theme “Celebrating

Collaboration” was well aligned with the emphasis on quality assurance at the tertiary level in the country. He asked for more collaboration between COBEC and ATLIB and among ATLIB members. He concluded that multi-cultural Belize had priceless opportunities to offer and that these would contribute to the collaborative work of COBEC.

Greetings were extended by **Major Gilbert Swazo, Mayor of Dangriga Town**, who extended best wishes to the visitors and asked them to take the warm smiles of the people of Dangriga back with them.

### **1.3 KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**Mr. Francis Humphreys, Emeritus Principal of Ecumenical High School**, was the keynote speaker for the gathering. He recalled that COBEC started from 1988 but signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 1990 and indicated that collaboration between gentlemen of the Bay of Honduras and the US began much earlier than that. He stressed the need for collaborations within BELIZE, not for rivalry and called for better curricula that would teach what Belize needs to move the country forward. He congratulated the delegates and encouraged them to appreciate what the conference had to offer.

The Opening Ceremonies closed after a cultural presentation by the students of EJC.

### **2.0 PRESENTATIONS**

The morning session concluded with four presentations, highlights of which are provided below.

#### **2.1 Education and Challenges in the Stann Creek District by Dr. Tanya Nunez (District Education Manager, Stann Creek District)**

**Dr. Tanya Nunez** reported that the Stann Creek District had 13,600 students enrolled in 35 pre-schools, 36 primary schools, 5 secondary schools, 2 junior colleges and 1 ITVET Center. She noted the functions of her office and identified some of the challenges faced including below average scores on both standardized exams in Belize - the Belize Junior Achievement Test (BJAT) and Primary School Examination (PSE); less than 50% of secondary school students attained satisfactory grades in the English A exam in the Caribbean Examination Certificate (CXC), a key requirement to gain Government scholarships.

She highlighted several factors that contributed to these challenges including the lack of Instructional leadership, lack of parental involvement, a variety of socio-economic ills and lack of resources in schools. She outlined measures undertaken by the Ministry of Education to address these challenges and concluded that improvement would only be seen if stakeholders’ attitudes remained positive and teachers believed in their students.

#### **2.2 Belize National Research and Education Network by Mr. Ruel Cima, Caribbean National Research and Education Networks (Caribnet)**

**Mr. Cima** explained that the National Research and Education Network (NREN) were developed to transform people and institutions by providing access to a digital library and video conferencing. It could host learning management systems and facilitate e-learning classrooms. He explained that NREN

was a closed user group dedicated to knowledge creation and sharing. He elaborated that NRENs would operate as a national backbone to connect user institutions to other NRENs in the US, the Caribbean and Central America. It was a collaborative effort of stakeholders such as UB, the Association of Tertiary Level Institutions of Belize (ATLIB), Belize Telemedia, and the UWI, Open Campus.

### **2.3 Intercultural Bilingual Education In Belize – Mrs. Gwen Nunez Gonzalez (Doctoral candidate)**

**Mrs. Nunez Gonzalez** indicated that the initiative was based on UNESCO's guidelines for bilingual education which aimed at empowering students to appreciate themselves, allowing learners to be educated in their first language and learn another without losing the value and competency in their first language, and contributing to a more inclusive society. She explained that UNICEF funded 3 primary schools in the country: Gulisi Community Primary School, where students learn Garifuna and dress in cultural wear, San Jose RC Toledo, where teachers and students wear cultural dress and learn Maya Mopan language and Aguacate RC where students learn Kekchi Maya. There is also one secondary school, Tumul Kin Center, where intercultural education is delivered through its residential programme.

### **2.4 Medical Tourism & Educational Opportunities in Belize – Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE), Mr. Jalen Avila - Medical Tourism Development and Mr. Hero Balani – Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)**

**Mr. Avila** reported that BELTRAIDE was responding to investors' demands for a skilled labor force in Medical Tourism. Skills are needed to operating medical devices such as CT scan machine, Training for emergency medical technician (EMT) and Lab Technicians (Laboratory). **Mr. Balani** explained that under the Caribbean Initiative, BELTRAIDE was able to develop a National BPO Strategy for Belize. He elaborated that the education sector in Belize can fit in by improving on the soft skills and technical skills required for the BPO.

### **3.0 Discussion on the theme: CELEBRATING COLLABORATIONS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE (strengths, challenges and future plans)**

The afternoon began with a discussion chaired by Mr. Adrian Leiva. Presentations were made by the following persons on topics as listed:

- Dr. Cynthia Eve Aird on Historical Perspective on Ideal Partnerships
- Dr. David Ostroth (Bridgewater) and Dr. Carol Babb - Collaboration between Bridgewater and Ministry of Education Youth & Sports (MOEY&S)
- Dr. Marilyn McElwain - University of Indianapolis - Update on Uindy's collaboration in Belize
- Dr. Susan Catapano – Partnership between University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW) and the schools in San Pedro
- Dr. John Kempainen - University of North Florida (UNF) Collaboration to move COBEC forward
- Dr. Meredith Mckee - University of Arkansas (UArk) in Dangriga

**Dr. Anthony Adey** from Memorial University in Canada then shared on his exploratory visit to Belize and he pledged to continue working in Belize and requested for Memorial University to become a member of COBEC.

The day ended with the presentation of a doctoral research report **THE LEADERSHIP ROLES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT HEADS IN BELIZE** by Dr. Ethel Arzu Hernandez

**Dr. Arzu Hernandez** dissertation explained that continuous professional development is a necessity for Department Heads and Policymakers especially in technical and vocational schools. She mentioned that leadership is everybody's business and the quality of teachers' education is crucial in determining the skills of workers in the Belizean economy.

## **DAY 2**

**4.0** The second day continued with four presentations:

### **4.1 Mr. Ravey Vellos, Adult Education Coordinator, CJC – Report on Certificate in School Leadership Programme**

Mr. Vellos shared on a collaborative training programme involving the MOEY&S, the European Union and Corozal Junior College which is designed to give training to school leaders at the Primary School level in leadership concepts and skills, instructional leadership, curriculum development and delivery, proposal writing and legislations governing education in Belize. The skills were assessed through field experience, case studies, coaching, and reflective practice. Other assessment modes included self study course books, on-line activities using the Moodle platform, and face-to-face sessions. It was noted that there are plans to launch the programme at Sacred Heart Junior College for school leaders in the Cayo District.

### **4.2 Mrs. Jane Bennett, Head, UWI Open Campus, Belize: Urban Gardens in the Port Loyola Area, Belize City**

Mrs. Bennett gave a follow-up report on the Garden project and indicated that a timeline had been prepared which would be shared with all COBEC partners and that progress was being made. UWI is the key coordinator working along with other key stakeholders including Jane Usher Boulevard Community Leaders, Duke of Edingurgh Award Programme, Ministry of Agriculture, University of Belize, Galen University, Restore Belize, CISCO, Belize City Council, Social Investment Fund, Young Men Christian Association, Hand in Hand Ministries, Beltraide and others. To date several COBEC partners had agreed to student participation. In addition, financial assistance is expected from the Social Investment Fund and the United Nations Development Fund (US\$50,000). Hand-In-Hand Ministry and the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) would be the Non-Governmental Organizations through which the funds would be given by UNDP to implement the programme.

### **4.3 Presentation by Belize National Library Service Report on RDA training – Mrs. Joy Ysaguirre**

Mrs. Ysaguirre reported that the National Library Service had invited librarians from across the country to participate in the RDA training. Thirty-six persons attended who received 24 state credits for accreditation from Valdosta, a flash drive and RDA Toolkit. Participants also noted the need for further training.

### **4.4 Collaborative relationships through COBEC – Mr. Jose Mai, Dr Richard Carvajal**

Mr. Mai reported on the collaboration between Corozal Junior College (CJC) and Bainbridge College. He explained that since 2007 CJC has received needed assistant in IT and professional development sessions through the support of Dr. Carvajal. In return, CJC helped place student teachers from Bainbridge in some of the Corozal preschools and primary schools. Mr. Mai also pointed out that CJC has established linkages with Murray State and has received computer equipment and books as resource materials. He thanked Emilia Hodge and Bonnie Higginson for making these collaborations possible. Mr. Mai closed by saying that these are ways to link and work together to bring benefits to all institutions involved.

Dr. Carvajal shared that the relationship with CJC supported study abroad for students and in return they hosted members from CJC in Georgia. Bainbridge College will be embarking on delivering on-line modality to CJC by bringing staff to help in the transition.

The Conference was completed with the Business Meeting.

### **1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

1.1 The meeting was called to order at 10:46 am by the US and Belize Co-Chairs - Dr. John Kemppainen and Mrs. Jane Bennett.

### **2.0 ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA**

2.1 Dr. Aird suggested adding to the agenda: Discussion on where do we go with COBEC. Thereafter the Agenda was accepted on a motion by Deborah Davis, seconded by Bonnie Higginson.

### **3.0 CO-CHAIRS REPORTS**

3.1 The co-chairs presented reports, highlights of which are as follows:

Dr. Kemppainen:

He was appreciative of the high level of support amongst institutions.

He cited the library project as an excellent example of COBEC collaboration involving Bainbridge College, VSU, UB, UWI, National Library and other schools joined together to address a need.

Achievement of 501 C3 status, (recognition of COBEC as a public charity) thanks to the diligence of Susan Ralph.

There is need to develop ways to enhance the professional growth of the organization.

Mrs. Bennett:

Gratitude to the US COBEC partners for attending the conference and Dr. Karen Martinez and her team for organizing the activities

Need to document past, current and future collaborations and share this information for historical purposes but also to facilitate more collaborations; information could be included in the COBEC newsletter

### **4.0 TREASURERS' REPORT**

**4.1 US TREASURER**, Deborah Davis, reported that the account was transferred to First State Bank (Georgia) but that closing the account posed great difficulty. Deborah noted that eventually the COBEC account would have to be placed in a national bank to avoid problems with the closing and opening of accounts. She reported that the US account balance excluding the travels and dues was \$23,589.00. The biggest expense for the year, other than a few grants, was to get the Non-profit status which cost \$500.00US. She also mentioned that statements would be sent out to US members to collect dues. She reminded members that the COBEC website moved to cobec.org and that members should forward information to her for the newsletter.

**4.2 BZE TREASURER/SECRETARY**, Marie Young, reported that since she took over in July 2013 expenses were \$500.00 BZ Dollars, income was \$218.00 BZ Dollars and the bank balance at Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2013 was \$1,837.44 BZ dollars. She appealed to all members to pay dues to assist with expenses.

## **5.0 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

Dr. Kemppanien explained that the Minutes from the COBEC conference held at Valdosta and San Pedro were not yet ready so he asked the members for permission to table these Minutes for approval at the next COBEC Meeting in July 2014 at Indianapolis. Members agreed. Ms. Brenda Armstrong volunteered to assist in recovering the minutes from the last two meetings.

## **6.0 REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES**

### **6.1 College Administrators/Faculty Experience (CAFÉ)**

Dr. Sharmayne Saunders reported that 50 persons attended the EBSCO CAFÉ workshop. At the start of the workshop participants were frustrated due to internet connection. The participants questioned, why EBSCO and not GOOGLE. But she reminded them that the MOEY&S had purchased EBSCO for Belizean schools. She mentioned that the facilitator was highly technical and he needed to sensitize participants on how to share information with students.

Dr. Saunders shared that ATLIB had identified a subcommittee to look at administration and faculty training. The topics compiled were from the administrators but she agreed to compile results from CAFÉ workshops to assist with the planning. Wilmington College showed interest to participate in the faculty trainings in Belize.

Discussion ensued on who funds CAFÉ workshops and who should be the presenters for the workshops. Dr. Saunders stated that CAFÉ must be co-facilitated for a rich faculty experience. It was noted that in the past funding for CAFÉ came from both the US COBEC account (paid the flights for US trainers) and ATLIB. There is need to clarify the procedures to avoid future misconceptions. It was suggested that COBEC might need to increase fees in order to fund the professional growth that would help schools. Additional funding could also be obtained from tax free political grants in the US. Dr. Kemppanien suggested that Dr. Ethel Arzu Hernandez be asked to co-present at one of the CAFÉ workshops and Dr. Arzu Hernandez agreed.

### **6.2 College Fair and Counselling Training (CFACT)**

Mr. Miguel Montero reported that invitations were sent to banks to attend the COBEC College fair. The Committee made suggestions to increase community participation at the fair including promotion on the morning talk shows, posting contact information on facebook accounts, and sending text blasts using BTL. It was also suggested that counseling workshops be done in the summer during the COBEC Pre-Conference sessions to better equip administrators, lecturers and faculty to assist students with career choices.

An invitation will be extended to BAPSS to attend the COBEC college fair with their 3rd and 4th Formers and Junior Colleges should attend as well to promote their respective institution.

## **7.0 Study Abroad**

The Study Abroad committee reported that the Best Practices for the Study Abroad document and the Faculty Development Seminar were discussed. The committee asked that the Best Practices document be published on the COBEC website since it was unanimously approved at the Summer 2013 meeting. The committee discussed the appointment of a Belizean co-director for this committee. Dr. Ethel Arzu Hernandez volunteered to serve. Her offer was warmly welcomed, and she was unanimously acclaimed as Co-Director.

With regard to the Faculty Development Seminar in Belize, the committee strongly supported the proposal as revised after the Summer 2013 meeting. During the discussion Warren Hodge moved that Dwight Call serve as the seminar leader. The motion was seconded by Joel Shoemaker and unanimously approved. It was agreed that a four-member working subcommittee be appointed to work through the planning details for the seminar consisting of the non-Belizean and Belizean Co-Directors as well as Michelle Arnold and Warren Hodge. It was also agreed that the time-line for the program seminar be accepted.

## **8.0 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS**

Memorial University College is applying for membership in COBEC. Mrs. Jane Bennett also reported that 3<sup>rd</sup> party institutions like Toucan and Monkey Bay were asking to become members of COBEC. Discussion ensued on organizations that were for profit and non-degree type programmes who wanted to be a part of COBEC. Dr. Kemppainen remembered that he promoted a Publishing Company when Wesley Junior College hosted. A word of caution was noted by members on institutions who become members. Dr. Ivan Nikolov suggested that we can have different types or levels of membership in COBEC. Dr. Betty Flinchum noted that business organizations should not be members since COBEC was a non-profit organization. It was agreed that a committee consisting of Dwight Call and Neil McCrillis be appointed to check the By-Laws to clarify which institutions qualified for membership.

## **9.0 MATTERS ARISING**

9.1 It was agreed to accept two types of membership: General and Emeritus. A committee was formed with Kirk Armstrong, John Kemppainen, Eve Aird and Jane Bennett to include in bylaws the different levels of membership. It was suggested that emeritus members have no voting privilege but the committee would need to decide on the limits of their participation.

9.2 The US and Belize groups met and nominated members for the executive positions. US nominated Neil McCrillis for US Co-Chair and Deborah Davis for treasurer. Belize nominated Jane Bennett for re-election as Belize Co-Chair and Marie Young for Treasurer/Secretary. Documentarian: Carly Wynne Womack remained in this position.

9.3 A motion to accept small grant submitted by Mr. Mai jointly with Dr. Carvajal for books, classroom supplies and travel expenses in the sum of \$1,524.00 was made by Dr. Aird and seconded by Dr. Neil McCrillis. The motion was unanimously agreed by members.

## **10.0 VENUE FOR NEXT COBEC CONFERENCE**

10.1 The Summer Conference will be hosted by University of Indianapolis on 17, 18 and 19 July, 2014. Dr. Marilyn McElwain asked that the Belize partners submit suggestions for workshops, presentations, excursions and theme. The Winter Conference will be hosted by Corozal Junior College in February 2015.

## **11.0 ADJOURNMENT**

11.1 The meeting was adjourned at 2:46 pm after applause and congratulations were expressed once again to Ecumenical Junior College for an excellent conference.

Recorded by,  
Marie Young, Secretary