



COBEC Winter 2016 Conference February 4-5, 2016

Venue: Robert's Grove, Placencia Village, Stann Creek District

Hosted by: Independence Junior College

Participants Present on February 4 and 5, 2015 (if there is NO *it indicates attendance on Feb 4, ONE * indicates attendance on both Feb 4 & 5 and TWO ** indicates attendance on ONLY Feb 5)

Name	Institution Affiliation	Name	Institution Affiliation
Lisa Battaglino*	Bridgewater State University	Darlene Goodrich	University of South Florida
John Kempainen*	University of North Florida	Carlise Womack Wynne*	University of North Georgia
Marie Ann Young*	Independence Junior College	Bonnie Higginson*	Murray State University
Marita Linarez*	Independence Junior College	Neal McCrillis	Columbus State University
Susan Syverud*	University of North Florida	Hugo Gonzalez*	Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College
Deborah Reed*	University of North Florida	Lusiola Castillo*	Belize Library Service and Information Service
Joel Shoemaker*	Madison Area Technical College	Ethel Arzu *	University of Belize
Arnold van Stuivenberg*	Ecumenical Junior College	Christa Hulse*	University of Belize
Karen Martinez*	Ecumenical Junior College	Michael Brennan	Hillsborough Community College
Megan Popkey**	Northeast Wisconsin Technical College	Karen W. Jason *	Bridgewater State University
Waren Hodge*	University of North Florida	Shaunna Vaccaro*	Senior Library Assistant
Emilia Hodge*	University of Florida	Sherelene Enriquez	University of Belize
Rick Bateman, Jr	Bossier Parish Community College	Juliane Pasos	University of Belize
Mary Beth Boettcher**	Northeast Wisconsin Technical College	Karen Waight	University of Belize
Kelly Medade*	Bossier Parish Community College	Cecy Castillo	University of Belize
Allison Martin*	Bossier Parish Community College	Martin Cuellar	GALEN University
Kathaleena Edward Monds*	Albany State University	Joel Clarke*	Belize Adventist Junior College
Nneka Nora Osakwe*	Albany State University	Javiola Aragon *	Ministry of education
Jane Bennett*	UWI Open Campus, Belize	Alfredo Mai	Ministry of education
Eleanor Gillett*	Wesley Junior College	Aline Harrison*	GALEN University
Fermin Magana*	Sacred Heart Junior College	G G of Belize Sir Colville Young	Emeritus
Ivan Nikola*	Valdosta State University	Deborah S. Davis*	Valdosta State University
Sharmayne Saunders*	UWI Open Campus, Belize	Betty Flinchum*	Emeritus
Jose Mai*	Corozal Junior College	Gustavo Ellis*	San Pedro Junior College
Miguel Montero*	Corozal Junior College	Froylan Gilharry*	San Pedro Junior College
Ravey Vellos*	Corozal Junior College	Lea Fernandes*	University of North Florida
Tanya Delgado*	University of South Florida	Amy Lynn Farmer*	University of Arkansas
Geoff Bradshaw*	Madison Area Technical College	Renee Jefferson*	The Citadel, Zucker Family School of Education
Larry G. Daniel*	The Citadel, Zucker Family School of Education	Joy Ysaguirre*	National Library Service
Eve Aird*	GALEN University	Cynthia Thompson	University of Belize
Carlos Lopez*	Murray State University	Carol Babb	Ministry of Education
Patricia Emmons*	Bridgewater State University	Marcia Combs-Ford*	Murray State University
Susan Catapano*	University of North Carolina Wilmington	Harrison Davis*	University of North Georgia
Nester Chan	University of Belize	Filiberto Penados**	CELA

CONFERENCE DAY 1

1.0 OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

The official opening ceremony commenced at 10:10 a.m. The Mistress of Ceremonies was Ms. Jamila Parrish, English Lecturer Independence Junior College (IJC). The program started with the National Anthem of the USA, followed by that of Belize which was lead by Mr. Joel Simpson, student of IJC. Mr. Jerome Lozano, Pastor of the Nazarene Church and members of IJC's Board of Governors gave the prayer.

1.1 WELCOME FROM INSTITUTION

Mr. Omar Longworth, President IJC, welcomed participants and elaborated that formal education has been under continuous scrutiny. In an effort to ensure that the people and the institution they serve are provided with continued revision and take the steps necessary to make the changes to help students think globally, he expressed that we need to go beyond education and seek freedom, liberty, justice, fairness and rethinking to fit in. He mentioned that schools are centers for renewal and urged educators to ask questions to stimulate curiosity and to be reflective.

He concluded his remarks by extending a warm welcome from his institution in southern Belize.

1.2 WELCOME FROM COBEC CO-CHAIRS

Mrs. Jane Bennett, Head of the UWI Open Campus, Belize and Belize Co-chair of COBEC, welcomed the delegates to the 2016 COBEC Winter Conference and thanked the US partners for taking the time to come and share with us in Belize. She mentioned that we look forward to the collaborations and sharing that we knew would come out of the session. She extended a warm welcome to Sir Colville Young, the Governor General of Belize (a founding member of COBEC) and also to the Honourable Patrick Faber, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports of Belize.

Dr. Neal McCrillis, Columbus State University and US Co-chair of COBEC, - welcomed colleagues to the conference and explained that he was impressed by the wealth of knowledge in the room and was grateful for the opportunity to collaborate. He expressed that COBEC is a structured organization that has been built on benefiting our US and BZ students, it has a remarkable mission to move forward and he explained that the joining of new organizations gives testimony to the fact that we are a great organization that is moving in the right direction. He concluded by extending thanks to members for coming and mentioned that we look forward to the discussions.

1.3 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Honourable Patrick Faber, Minister of Education Youth and Sports, Government of Belize, expressed that he was pleased to be there and shared that the Ministry has accomplished much of what was started. He mentioned areas such as: offering of subsidy and increase access; financing of secondary schools; diversified curriculum; Vocational and Technical programs; continuing education for persons who had left the formal system; competency in MATH and ENG among others; financing of external exams; activation of the national accreditation council; commitment to train and certify teachers and vice-principals; and cracking down on teachers license. In his remarks, he also highlighted some examples of partnerships with COBEC institutions and the

Ministry that were formed. These included: Bridgewater State University, assisted with training teachers; University of North Florida, worked with Kuxilin Ha Government School; the Citadel University, worked with teachers' at the United Evergreen Primary School; and University of Valdosta, for library training. He mentioned that the Ministry had adhered to the strategic plan to improve the education sector in areas such as the construction of 35 new schools (pre-schools and primary), the improvement of health care, the increase in enrolment, the awarding of subsidy for the poor and at risk students and institutions, the establishment of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) Program and the Apprentice Program. He explained that the Ministry of Education has focused on teachers' education and compared the statistics from 2008-09 with 2014-15. The statistics showed a growth in trained pre-school teachers from 11.9% to 32%; in trained primary school teachers from 43% to 68%; and in trained secondary school teachers from 30% to 40%. He emphasized that he has fully enforced the Education Act of 2009, in particular the rule which states that teachers need to get licensed which is based on qualification. He explained that the Ministry is struggling with resistance but pledged to continue with training of teachers. He concluded his remarks by seeking support from all COBEC partners because he reiterated that much more needs to be done.

1.4 GREETINGS

Mr. Jerome Lozano, Treasure of IJC Board of Governors, presented greetings on behalf of the Chairman, Mr. Elroy Foreman, who was unable to attend the Opening Ceremony of the COBEC Conference. The remarks mentioned five key responsibilities that meaningful collaboration should focus on, they included;

- higher learning success for all students based on high standards
- creating a climate hospitable to education and fruitful interaction
- cultivation of leadership in others so that teachers and others assume their roles in realizing the school vision,
- instruction for teachers to help students learn their utmost
- managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement

The message expressed the Chairman wish that through the two days of the conference members could deliberate on these pointers and seek positive results. In conclusion, he said that he hoped everyone attending the Conference would have a great time and enjoy southern Belize, he wished everyone safe returns back home and he urged members to impact positively the students they serve.

1.5 THANK YOU

Mrs. Marie Scott-Young, Dean of IJC, expressed her appreciation to all her faculty, staff and students for their assistance with the conference logistics. She also expressed thanks to the Board of Governors for their financial contributions; to Dr. Karen Martinez for helping with the program and the many speakers who participated in the opening ceremonies.

2.0 BEST PRACTICE PRESENTATIONS

The morning session concluded with three best practice presentations; highlights of which are provided below:

- Allison Haugthon Martin, Director of Institutional Effectiveness Initiatives, Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC) – presented on BPCC’s free preparatory courses.
- Dr. Steven Surrency and Darlene Goodrich, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at University of South Florida (USF) – presented on making sign language interpretation accessible to higher education.
- Dr. Carly Womack Wynne – presented on Quality assurance in online platform.

3.0 PANEL DISCUSSION

The afternoon session continued with a panel discussion on the topic: Meeting the needs of our students: developing citizenship and employability skills for the twenty-first century. The moderator of the session was Dr. Karen Martinez, Dean of Ecumenical Junior College (EJC). Speakers included the following;

✓ **Ms. Loretta Logan**, former student (IJC)

✓ **Mr. Stewart Krohn**, Industry Representation

✓ **Dr. Martin Cuellar**, Institution Representation (GALEN)

✓ **Dr. Nuellin Villanueva**, Ministry of Education Representative

Day 1 of the conference ended with a second day of the COBEC College Fair which was well attended by students from Independence Junior College and Ecumenical Junior College.

CONFERENCE DAY 2

PRESENTATIONS ON PAST EXPERIENCES – *BENEFITS, STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, WEAKNESSES, FUTURE INITIATIVES AND OTHERS*

The morning began with presentations on members’ past experiences - benefits, strengths, challenges, weaknesses, future initiatives, and so on. Presentations were made by the following persons on topics listed below:

1. Susan Catapano, Ed.D. Professor Watson College of Education, University of North Carolina Wilmington and Dr. Candy Armstrong, Ministry of Education presented on the University of North Carolina work with representatives of the Ministry to develop a program in classroom management.
2. Dr. John Kemppainen, Drs. Syrverud and Reed, University of North Florida (UNF) gave a presentation on University of Belize (UB) and UNF International Professional Development School collaboration and progress.
3. Dr. Lisa Battaglini & Dr. Patricia Emmon, College of Education and Allied Studies, Bridgewater State University Professional Development Schools presented on partnerships with pre-service teachers.

4. Mary Beth Boettcher and Megan Popkey, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) presented with Mr. Jose Mai and Mr. Ravey Vellos, Corozal Junior College (CJC) on their service learning project.
5. Dr. Marcia Combs-Ford, Assistant professor at Murray State University, presented on the service learning program being conducted at Alvin L. Young Nazarene High School located in the San Jose Succotz Village, Cayo District, Belize.
6. Dr. Emilia Hodge presented the outline of the COBEC evaluation plan and introduced the assessment team working on the project. Dr. Betty Flinchum commented on the preliminary work and encouraged COBEC to participate in the evaluation project.

COBEC BUSINESS MEETING

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

1.1 The Business Meeting was called to order by the Belize Co-chair, Mrs. Jane Bennett.

2.0 ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

2.1 Under any other business the US and Belize Co-chairs requested for the respective US and Belize COBEC partners to caucus for vacant executive positions. Mrs. Jane notified members that Dr. Neal McCrillis, US Co-chair would continue his post but that she would have to step down as Belize Co-Chair after serving for four (4) wonderful years. She wanted to thank everyone for the privilege to have served in that capacity.

Under any other business, Mrs. Bennett also suggested that we insert, requesting assistance from partners for school counseling.

Thereafter, the Agenda was unanimously **accepted** by the membership with the suggested additions.

3.0 ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

3.1 The corrections to the minutes are listed below:

1. On Page 1 changes were; **Gustavo Ellis of SPJC not Valdosta, Larry Daniel not Daniel Larry, Albany State not Alabama, Deborah Reed** was added to the participants list.
2. On Page 7 it was suggested to add a new numbering and subheading **8.0 Opening Discussion**.
3. Under section 7.0 on page 7 correction was made to the spelling of the word **faculty**.
4. Under section 7.0 correction was made to the spelling of **John Kempainen**
4. On page 6 section 6.0 # 3 **Coastal College of Georgia** was inserted
5. On Page 8 it was suggested to rephrase statement #3 under 10.1 to read: **if we attend the COBEC conference we must be fully committed to the days of the conference, and that we arrive on time and stay for the full duration of the meeting.**

Deborah Davis moved for the acceptance of the Minutes with corrections, and was seconded by Dr. Sharmayne Saunders. Members **unanimously agreed**.

4.0 TREASURERS' REPORT

4.1 US Treasurer, Deborah Davis, reported that this was a good year where expenses were \$4,160.10 (US) and the income was \$4,200.00 (US). She mentioned that the year ended with a healthy balance of \$20,631.01(US). Dr. Davis explained that the income would go down in the year due to numerous grants. She proposed for an increase of small grants because \$1,500.00 (US) does not cover the expense of the trip to Belize and for the duration and that the grant should be increased by \$500 but she explained to do that we might want to amend the dues of \$200 to at least \$500.

4.1.1 Questions was raised regarding expenses made and it was suggested that an explanation be placed beside the line items for better understanding of the budget.

4.1.2 Ivan Nikolov volunteered to brainstorm on how many grants could be handled by the US funds each year, what would be the implications for increasing fees and how much should fees be increased by and finally the priority for grants that is meaningful for US and Belize partners.

4.1.3 Dr. Neal McCrillis suggested that a small committee be formed to assist Ivan Nikolov and that a presentation with the findings be made at the next Conference. Volunteers included Deborah Davis, Bonnie Higginson, Nneka Nora Osakwe, Rick Bateman and Fermin Magana. Mr. Fermin Magana would be consulted when the Committee looked at the priorities for Belize. It was also suggested that the Committee look over whether or not to increase conference fees.

4.1.4 Bonnie Higginson moved for the acceptance of the US treasurer's report, seconded by John Kempainen. Membership unanimously **agreed**.

4.2 BZE Treasurer/secretary report, Mrs. Marie Scott-Young, stated that the Belize financial report was for the period 30th June 2015 until December 31st 2015. Expenditures for the period included: allowances for Secretary/Treasurer and Co-chair to attend the COBEC Conference in the US and for bank charges. The closing statement for this period had a balance of \$3,811.46 (BZ). She reported that the majority of the members had paid up but she needed to reconcile with the bank deposit.

4.2.1 Dr. Saunders recommended that the Treasurer's Report include an explanation immediately after the deposit for easier understanding of the report. Dr. Aird suggested a comprehensive revision of the conference fees and membership dues. Dr. Saunders and Mrs. Young agreed to collect data from institutions who had hosted conferences at least 3-4 years back so that we could get a true reflection of the cost. It was suggested that the findings be reported at the July meeting and members would vote on whether to increase the registration fees.

4.2.2 Dr. Saunders moved for the acceptance of the BZ treasurer's report, seconded by Fermin Magana. Membership unanimously **agreed**.

5.0 COBEC Small Grants Report

Dr. Neal McCrillis reported that the executive committee approved COBEC small grant of \$1,500.00 (US) to Betty Flinchum to partially support her expenses to conduct interviews in Belize and to pay for transcription costs. He mentioned that the approved grant was far less than the true cost for Dr. Flinchum's travel and work.

6.0 Faculty Seminar Workshop Update

In Dr. McCrillis's update he reported that of the 5 applications received for the faculty seminar 3 were from Columbus State University and 2 were from Northeast Wisconsin. Unfortunately, he explained that the target group was 10 so it would not work with that small number of participants. He informed the members that after consulting with Dr. Dwight Call they decided to cancel the programme. Dr. McCrillis expressed his appreciation to Dr. Call for all the work he had put into designing the faculty seminar. Dr. McCrillis explained that Dr. Call has declined from leading the committee so if anyone wanted to lead the faculty seminar the position is open.

6.1 Dr. Ivan Nikolov noted that the reason his institution did not support was because of budgetary constraints. He mentioned that in this kind of environment it needed a lot of financial support to move it forward.

7.0 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS (Full and Associate)

The following institutions were approved for membership in COBEC:

1. Bossier Parrish Community College (BPCC) in North West Louisiana was presented by Dr. Rick Bateman. Dr. Eve Aird made a motion to accept BPCC as a member of COBEC, seconded by Dr. Deborah Davis. All members unanimously **accepted** the motion.
2. The Citadel, Zucker Family School of Education was presented by Dr. Larry Daniel. A motion was made by Dr. John Kempainen, seconded by Dr. Ethel Arzu. Members all **agreed**.
3. Albany State University was presented by Dr. Kathaleena Edward Monds. A motion was made by Dr. Bonnie Higginson, which was seconded by Dr. Ivan Nikolov. All members unanimously **accepted** the motion.

8.0 REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

8.1 **College Administrators/Faculty Experience (CAFÉ):** Dr. Sharmayne Saunders reported that at the COBEC CAFÉ workshop four (4) workshops were delivered. The topics were: **Business Affairs and Operations for Money Management within Institutions** that was facilitated by Mr. F. Mac McConnell for bursars and administrators; two (2) sessions on Best Practices in On-line Teaching that were facilitated by Dr. Carlise Womack Wynne for lecturers; and Quality Assurance in Education that was facilitated by Dr. Susan Syverud and Dr. Debbie Reed. She mentioned that there were about 150 participants at the 4 sessions.

Dr. Saunders explained that she and Dr. Susan Syverud were the Co chairs of CAFÉ and that they would look into ways to improve the faculty experience. Quality Assurance and Accreditation were the areas they believed were what mattered most to institutions. She explained that they have some volunteers and would merge activities with ATLIB to capitalize on the limited resources. She elaborated that faculty might need to take responsibility for their own development and at least pay for their food. Dr. Saunders mentioned that she would share the summary of the evaluations so that administration could assist in prioritizing the list of professional development sessions.

8.1.1 It was suggested that the administrators' professional development happens in the summer while for the faculty it would be in the winter. In addition, the committee would keep a database of topics for faculty and administrators.

8.2 **Study Abroad Committee:** Dr. Bonnie Higginson reported that the committee had an excellent interaction where they discussed programs that US institutions can partner in. Programs discussed were agriculture, tourism, counseling, music and so on. She explained to the US institutions that she would be the contact person who could help to linking the BZ and US schools. Another thing discussed was that the committee needed a list of all the study abroad programs sponsored by COBEC institutions because of the growing need for a more consortium atmosphere of efforts between the partners in the US to bring students down. She elaborated that maybe one institution in the US might be bring down students in the same areas and she has volunteered to assist the US Co-Chair to gather this data.

8.3 **College Fair Committee (C-FACT):** Mr. Ravey Vellos reported that the committee was pleased with the dual College Fairs but would like to seek an endorsement from the membership for the two days of college fairs where one is held in Belize City and the other at the institution hosting the conference. He mentioned that they noticed this year that in Belize City the College fair did not have a lot of Universities and they diagnosed that the reason for not having a lot of schools at Belize College fair was largely due to transportation problems. He explained that they are strongly suggesting that the institution hosting the conference makes arrangements for transportation of members from the college fair to the location of the conference. To do this, the committee has proposed that the host institution provide a caravan to transport members to the conference or the host institution could get funds through the local town council or ask the members using the transportation to contribute a small fee towards the cost. At the meeting five institutions agreed with this means of transportation. He also asked that the Belizean host institution send the relevant information to Dr. Hodge so that she can disseminate transportation plans to the institutions in the US.

8.3.1 Some suggestions made to improve the college fair were: better communication, a complete list of members participating in the college fair is sent to the organizer, and promotion on social media such as: facebook pages, text blast and morning shows (one week before).

8.3.2 It was recommended that the Association of Tertiary Institution of Belize (ATLIB) members need to aggressively market the college fair by making the necessary arrangements to be present at the college fair.

8.3.3 A suggestion was made for the committee to invite the secondary schools since those students would benefit from information on the community colleges.

8.3.4 It was recommended that a committee be formed to check on the alignment or congruence of courses offered in Belize so that they could be transferred easily to the US institutions. Another suggestion made was for institutions to formulate a bi-lateral arrangement between the individual schools where students were seeking possible enrolment. Due to the time constraint it was agreed to continue the discussion in a separate session during the summer conference.

10.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1 Dr. Neal McCrillis gave an updated presentation of the COBEC conference that will be hosted by Columbus State University on the 28, 29 & 30 July 2016.
- 10.2 After the US and BZ groups caucused, Dr. Neal McCrillis, US Co-chair, was voted back in for a second term and Dr. Karen Martinez was voted in as the new BZ Co-Chair for the next two years. The official terms of officers commence in July 2016.
- 10.3 The Citadel, the University of North Georgia and the University of North Florida volunteered to assist with counseling in Belize.
- 10.4 Dr. Susan explained that Dr. Carlyn Stone and Dr. Becky had recommended Skype sessions to determine needs in different parts of Belize on counseling. Mrs. Jane Bennett offered to be the contact person in Belize to move the collaborations forward.
- 10.5 Dr. Rick Bateman informed members that in a month or so they would be getting an email requesting articles and ongoing activities regarding COBEC for the next issue of the Newsletter. Dr. John Kempainen acknowledged Dr. Rick Bateman for the last Newsletter for COBEC that was excellent.
- 10.6 Dr. Neal McCrillis agreed to update the listing of current members on the website. He notified members that he had already started the process of contacting members but would continue the effort so that he could confirm if those inactive members were interested in continuing their membership. Then all the updated members would be sent to Dr. Davis for the website.
- 10.7 Since communication was a major concern and COBEC did not have a paid officer to do this, it was suggested by Dr. Carly Womack Wynne that a face book group was established where people would post information onto the page directly instead of emailing.
- 10.8 Dr. John Kempainen recommended the reestablishment of an award's committee that was once unofficially chaired by Mr. Adrian Leiva. He recalled that, as a former chair, COBEC had acknowledged several persons like: Dr. Deborah Davis, Dr. Susan Ralph, and Mrs. Brenda Armstrong and since then His Excellency Sir Colville Young has also been acknowledged by COBEC. He believed that it was something that COBEC needed to continue. Dr. Aird suggested that criteria needed to be articulated for the awardees, for transparency, and that record needed to be kept. Dr. McCrillis suggested that COBEC should award institutions for Best Practices because it would be attractive, for recognition and for grant purposes. A suggestion was made for an ad hoc committee to be formed to oversee and recommend awardees. Mrs. Jane Bennett, Dr. Rick Bateman, Dr. John Kempainen, Dr. Eve Aird and Dr. Deborah Reed volunteered to join this committee.
- 10.9 The Co-Chairs' extended many thanks to Mrs. Marie Scott-Young, Dr. Karen Martinez and the IJC team, in particularly the young people, Roberts Grove and COBEC members for a successful conference.

11.0 VENUE FOR NEXT COBEC CONFERENCE

Summer 2016 – Columbus State University July 27, 28 &29, 2016

Winter 2017 – GALEN University

Summer 2017 – Madison Area Technical College

12.0 ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the Business Meeting was made by Dr. Neal McCrillis, and seconded by Dr. Karen Martinez.

Recorded by,
Marie Scott Young

(COBEC Secretary)