



COBEC Summer 2017 Conference February 2-3, 2017

Venue: Sacred Heart Junior College, Auditorium, San Ignacio, Cayo District

Hosted by: GALEN University

Participants Present on February 2 and 3, 2017 (\* indicates attendance ONLY for Feb 2, 2017)

Name	Institution	Name	Institution
Adamson, Nancy	SUNY-Cortland	Kemppainen, John	University of North Florida
Adey, Anthony*	Memorial University	Link, Jeannie	Sacred Heart Junior College
Aird, Eve	GALEN University	Lopez, Carlos	Murray State
Anderson, James	Armstrong University	Magana, Fermin	Sacred Heart Junior College
Aragon, Javiola	Ministry of Education	Manzanares, Myrna	Kriol Council
Arana, Thyra	University of Belize	Martin, Cuellar	GALEN University
Araujo, Blanco	New Mexico State	Martinez, Karen	Ecumenical Junior College
Arzu, Ethel	University of Belize	McCrillis, Neal	Columbus State University
Awad, Awad	University of North Georgia	Minister Patrick Faber*	Minister of Education
Babb, Carol*	Ministry of Education	Monds, Kathaleena Edward	Albany State University
Belize Book Industry Association	Benque Viejo Del Carmen	Montero, Miguel	Corozal Junior College
Bennett, Jane	University of the West Indies Open Campus	Nikolov, Ivan	Valdosta State University
Bradshaw, Geoff	Madison Technical College	Padron, Darlene*	Ministry of Sustainable Development
Brock, Gordon	University of North Florida	Patel, Nimasha	Wright State
Brown, Marlon	Corozal Junior College	Perez, Michelle	New Mexico State
Burgos, Addy	Sacred Heart Junior College	Pol, Carlos*	Ministry of Economic Development
Carballo, Rocio	Sacred Heart Junior College	Pope, Brian	College of Coastal Georgia
Castillo, Lusiola	National Library Service	Ruiz, David	John Paul II Junior College
Cattouse, Sylvia	GALEN University	Satchwell, Deryck	Ministry of Education
Daniel, Larry	The Citadel	Saunders, Sharmayne	University of the West Indies Open Campus
Davis, Deborah	Valdosta State University	Savery, Enriquez Shirlene*	University of Belize
Delgado, Tanya	University of South Florida	Shoemaker, Joel	Madison Technical College
Elisha, St. Luce	United Nation Development Programme	Smith, Cecilia*	Ministry of Education
Ellis, Gustavo	San Pedro Junior College	Smith, Neulin*	Ministry of Education
Emke, Ivan	Memorial University	Sosa, Gomez Cynthia*	Student
Emmons, Patricia	Bridgewater State University	Syverud, Susan	University of North Florida
Farmer, Amy	Arkansas	Thompson, Cynthia	University of Belize
Franco, Myra Susan*	Wright State	Vega, Victor	College of Coastal Georgia
Flinchum, Betty	Emeritus UNF	Wanderi, Joy	Wright State
Gibbs, Sherry	GALEN University	Watler, Bernard	University of Belize
Gilharry, Froylan	San Pedro Junior College	Weigel, Dorothy Mertz	Armstrong University
Gillett-Bodden, Eleanor	Wesley Junior College	Wiezman, Pat	Ministry of Sustainable Development

Gomez, Neima	San Pedro Junior College	Williams, Kenrick	Ministry of Sustainable Development
Higginson, Bonnie	Murray State	Wynne, Carlise	University of North Georgia
Hodge, Emilia	University of Florida	Young, June	University of Belize
Hodge, Warren	University of North Florida	Young, Marie Ann	Independence Junior College
Jodi, Burnside*	Pathlight	Zetina, Angel	Sacred Heart Junior College
Kemp, Michael	Murray State		

## CONFERENCE DAY 1

### 1.0 OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

The official opening ceremony was held at Sacred Heart Auditorium and commenced at 9:30 a.m. The Master of Ceremony was Dr. Martin Cuellar. The program started with the National Anthem of Belize, followed by that of the US. The invocation was led by Dr. David Aguilar.

### 1.1 WELCOME COBEC CO-CHAIRS

**Dr. Karen Martinez, Belize Co-Chair**, acknowledged and thanked those pioneering members who contributed to COBEC and paved the way since the 1980's. She welcomed all of the US colleagues to Belize and to beautiful San Ignacio, as members gathered at the winter conference hosted by Galen University under the theme: "Higher Education for Sustainable Development". Dr. Martinez welcomed and thanked Belizean colleagues and stakeholders in education for sustained efforts to extend and expand the reach for higher education in this nation. She extended gratitude to the host, Galen University and mentioned that sustainable development is one of the core values of GALEN and that we look forward to the presentation on the role that sustainable development has in Higher Education. She finished by challenging members to connect and collaborate and leave the session with a renewed drive and a structured direction for our future meetings and ventures.

**Dr. Neal McCrillis, US Co-Chair** was pleased to welcome all to the conference hosted by Galen at Sacred Heart College, and expressed appreciation for everything that the host had done to prepare for a very productive meeting. He explained that an organization like COBEC stands for the power of collaboration and that is why he has supported it. Dr. Neal announced that he had to step down as Co-Chair after this meeting because he was taking up a new position at a non COBEC institution. He explained that when the organization formulated the by-laws, a few years ago, it opened up the possibility for non- Belizean and outside of US institutions to join. Dr. Neal was overwhelmed because it showed that people were recognizing the value of the organization. He elaborated that new members are here to show that and he thought we should be very proud of COBEC's work. He concluded by thanking everyone and mentioned that he looked forward to a productive conference.

### 1.2 WELCOME FROM GALEN UNIVERSITY (GU) **Dr. Eve Aird, Provost of Galen**

**University**, mentioned that since the 1990's COBEC has grown and she had learnt a lot through the network and professional relationship of COBEC. She welcomed members to the

GALEN family and explained that she was happy to host the COBEC conference and that the next time GALEN was host it would be in their auditorium or conference meeting place. Dr. Aird thanked Mr. Magana and Mrs. Carballo and their staff for collaborating with them to set up the venue. She extended special thanks to Minister Faber for taking time from his busy day and to all who contributed in the presentations. She explained that sustainable development is one of GALEN's core values and that over the years she had been trying to see how schools can finance higher education. She mentioned the theme for this year's conference came to her during a United Nation Development Project session. She hoped that during the afternoon session COBEC can find a renewed focus and partner with the Government of Belize for all of us to realize our institutional missions.

### **1.3 ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE PATRICK FABER, MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

Minster Faber acknowledged all members at the head table especially Dr. Betty Flinchum and thanked Dr. Neal McCrillis for his years of service. He mentioned that COBEC institutions; specifically University of North Florida, had graduated many of the senior management team within the Ministry of Education. Mr. Faber shared that the Ministry of Education managed from early childhood to tertiary level and also dealt with vocational, technical and special education. He mentioned that COBEC has been strengthening and asked for COBEC's continued support with the ministry's agenda in partnering with US institutions and now Canada. He believed that there is a global development for COBEC and he recalled the early years of COBEC's support with licensing of teachers, so that today we are in a much better position as it relates to the full licensing of primary school teachers. Our qualified professionals provide a foundation for greater contributions to Belize. He elaborated that this is a wonderful reciprocal relationship and the Ministry continues to ask for support of education training. He called for COBEC's support in getting the early childhood teachers trained in the delivery of the established curriculum developed for the Belizean setting. Minister Faber also requested support in special education, vocational and technical education as other areas that needed development in Belize. He mentioned that professional development trainings that Belizean partners have received at the summer conferences have exposed them to the US campus and its operations, enabling them to come back energized with ideas to put in place at our institutions. He ended by saluting GALEN for hosting and for the theme of sustainable development and thanked COBEC institutions for the successes in Belize.

### **1.4 KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**Dr. Kenrick William, Adjunct Professor, GU and Officer within the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development,** spoke about the role of education in sustainable development and explained that humans increasing demands on the earth's resources has brought about great pressures on the ecosystem and the services that they provide. Our role as higher education in sustainable development is to research, interpret analyze, translate and educate on the critical issues. Sustainable development highlights the achievement of economic and social growth in ways that does not exhaust a country's natural

resources. Achieving sustainability is something we all must work towards, because it is a process focusing more on needs and abilities of generations that will inherit the land. He mentioned that sustainable development needs a systematic approach to development, recognizing the uniqueness and importance of society, institutions, the economy and the environment and the interface among these. The challenges of sustainability in many countries is to define what this means in the national context. Also, sustainable development globally has largely been led by governments, with institutions of higher education taking the back seat. In Belize, for example, sustainable development is led by the ministry of economic development and the ministry of forestry, fisheries, environment and sustainable development. Higher education institutions are engines of problem solving and national development and our role is to help society by developing the skills, knowledge and the techniques to address these problems.

He highlighted four (4) critical areas for the intervention of higher education. Institutions of higher education needs to aid in identifying sustainable development and its relevance to national development and develop a country model for sustainable development.

1. Higher education institutions need to refocus education delivery and leave time for faculty to do meaningful research. In Belize we lack critical data, monitoring and evaluation to guide planning and decision making.
2. Sustainability has to move from the theoretical to providing students with practical experience from a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing sustainability.
3. Students should be actively engaged in sustainability research and consultancies and in designing sustainable interventions in solar, technology and the environment, among other areas.
4. Higher education institutions are critical partners in planning, research capacity building, problem solving, collaboration and trust building.

Alignment of national and international objectives for regional and national development in a sustainable approach needed to be adhered to for improvement. Institutions of higher learning play a critical role in helping societies to overcome the challenges and achieve the multiple objectives of economic development, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and good governance. He concluded by urging all to evaluate what sustainability means for you, for us, for the country and for the community.

## **2.0 PRESENTATIONS**

In the morning sessions members participated in three presentations:

- The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Elishah St. Luce, Senior Governance Program Officer, UNDP
- Belize's Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS): Carlos Pol, M.Sc., Economist, Ministry of Economic Development
- The Tertiary Education Imperative of the GSDS: Mr. Deryck Satchwell, Ag. Director, Tertiary and Post-secondary Services, Ministry of Education

## **3.0 BREAKOUT SESSION**

The breakout session was moderated by Co-chairs of COBEC, Dr. Karen Martinez and Dr. Neal McCrillis. Below is a list of the opportunities for COBEC within the GSDS under the mission and objectives of COBEC:

1. Free Library sources (OER) – openstaxs, opendoors for institutional access
2. Create a repository for Belize. Drive research. Do documentation. Improve quality assurance.
3. Thesis should be deposited at the National Library service
4. Look at research on the demand side of the market
5. Offer courses in library services to better equip personnel
6. Book Drive by US partners to bring resource books to Belize
7. COBEC allocate funds for research project and identify grant for doctoral programme for joint research.
8. Assist with early childhood education
9. Strategic planning for COBEC in the summer meeting
10. Monies needed to run projects
11. Publish the work of the committees
12. Provide technical education to help drive COBEC
13. Look comprehensively at Health and Nutritional Programme to improve student lives
14. Sustainable development tied to our country's needs
15. Provide training in good leadership to Heads of Department and other sectors

#### **4.0 PLENARY SESSION**

During the plenary session members made suggestions:

- COBEC should serve as a clearing house for a peer reviewed journal publication.
- COBEC should foster collaborations by linking the needs of Belize with the strengths of foreign institutions and their education program to meet Belize's research needs.
- It was proposed that COBEC start a research journal. It was recommended that an Ad-hoc committee be formed to look at research. The committee members approved were: Joel Shoemaker, Susan Syverud, Ivan Nikolov, Mirna Manzanero, Susan Franco, Carly Wynne, Jean Bennett, Eve Aird, Brain Pope, and Deryck Satchwell. The chair appointed for the committee was Eve Aird.

Dr. Karen Martinez requested a space at the next COBEC conference to flesh out the pointers raised at the conference.

The session concluded with suggestions for areas to be covered at the next summer 2017 conference. The suggestions are highlighted below;

1. Identifying certificate courses to provide a ladder for achievement of students on the Vo-technical subjects
2. Pedagogy to retrain teachers
3. Best practices in working with cooperation
4. Research

5. ICAP programme in Georgia—models to training IT
6. How are we meeting the need of the workforce market? (How do we plant the seeds early?)
7. Strengths of COBEC in networking and partnership
8. More time to dialogue (suggestions: rotate speakers and break up concepts much smaller and form smaller group to be more effective)
9. Needed more time to discuss so it was suggested to cancel the second day of the fair since it interfered with matters being deliberated at the conference

## **5.0 COBEC ASSESSMENT TEAM REPORT**

COBEC assessment team report was presented by Dr. Emilia Hodge. The report included results and recommendations and the presentation has been posted on the COBEC website.

Following the presentation questions, observation and comments were presented and are listed below:

1. COBEC needs to evaluate the economic impact it has on Belize
2. COBEC needs to have historical record of the people who passed through COBEC (those who came to Belize and those who went to the US institutions)
3. COBEC needs to develop a protocol to document impact of study abroad, internship, workshop or degrees, and this should be posted on the COBEC website.
4. COBEC needs to set up criteria of (a) How meetings are conducted in regards to presentations and (b) How meetings can be improved.
5. When planning the conferences, some suggestions were:
  - a. COBEC planning committee develop a theme for the conference
  - b. COBEC planning committee invites speakers, three at most to present on the theme.
  - c. COBEC planning committee gives specific guidelines for the speakers (15 to 20 minutes) indicated by a timer. The speaker should generate collaborative questions (two or three) and at the end of each presentation we have a break out session immediately to address the questions.
  - d. COBEC planning committee should give evaluation collected at each conference to the next group hosting the conference.

Dr. Neal thanked the assessment team for their work and effort.

It was recommended and agreed by members to form a meeting planning committee that would be made up of the executive and the hosting institution.

Day 1 of the conference ended with a second day of the COBEC College Fair which was well attended by students from the western and southern institutions.

## **CONFERENCE DAY 2**

### **COBEC BUSINESS MEETING**

#### **1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

**1.1** The meeting was called to order at 8:55 am by the US and Belize Co-Chairs, Dr. Neal McCrillis and Dr. Karen Martinez, respectively.

#### **2.0 ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA**

**2.1** During the break at 10:15 the US Co-chairs requested for the US institutions to caucus for vacant executive positions of Co-chair and treasurer. The agenda was accepted with amendments on a motion by Dr. Bonnie Higginson, and seconded by Ms. Deborah Davis. All members accepted the agenda.

**2.2** Ms. Deborah Davis proposed a motion to add to the adhoc Research Committee the consideration for a peer review journal for COBEC and that a report should be presented at the summer meeting regarding the feasibility of developing the research journal, and seconded by Dr. John Kemppainen. All were in favour of adding that task to the committee.

**2.3** Dr. Neal McCrillis also motioned to add Ms. Deborah Davis to the committee and she accepted the nomination. All members were in favour of the nomination.

#### **3.0 ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES**

**3.1** Minutes were reviewed and corrections were made as cited below;

1. The correct spelling of the names: Marsha and Nikolov

2. Under treasurer's report 5.1 Ms. Davis not Dr. Davis

**3.2** A motion to accept the minutes with the corrections was tabled by Mrs. Jane Bennett, and seconded by Dr. Sharmayne Saunders. All members unanimously agreed.

#### **4.0 MATTERS ARISING**

##### **4.1 Matters arising from the minutes**

Dr. Neal MacCrillis notified membership that the by-laws stipulates that when a person moves from a COBEC institution to one that is not a COBEC institution then he or she must step down. Additionally, he mentioned that you can fill that position in any space of time but that non- COBEC institution cannot be a member. He explained that the normal procedure was to caucus and then nomination to the general meeting. However, Dr. McCrillis opened the floor for discussing on the procedure to be followed or changes to be made.

After the discussion a motion was raised that a standard procedure be followed that would allow for the person who is elected to fill another person's post and when his/her position comes up he/she may continue. It was also recommended for the by-laws to be edited to reflect this motion.

The motion on procedures for officers to fill vacant post was made by Victor Vega, and seconded by Geoff Bradshaw. All were in agreement.

#### **5.0 TREASURERS' REPORT**

**5.1.1 US TREASURER,** Ms. Deborah Davis reported that last year \$26,000.00 USD was collected: \$6,777.00 USD was spent, and \$18,892.29 USD was left in the account. Expenses

included travel grant to Betty Flinchum, Belize training, Workshops, Flowers for funeral and Registrar registration fees etc. She mentioned that the standing balance had gone down from last year.

- 5.1.2 Deborah recommended for COBEC treasury to be sustainable for the foreseeable future we needed to get more members and increase the dues.
- 5.1.3 Discussion ensued and membership concluded that they generally do not have a problem with the increase but they needed to go back to their institutions before voting at the next conference in summer 2017 for an increase in membership dues to \$300.00 USD since this would give institutions time to put it in the next budget year.
- 5.1.4 Dr. Carly made a motion for membership to go back to their management to discuss the proposed increase and that the motion will be tabled at the next COBEC conference in summer of 2017 for an increase of membership dues to \$300.00 USD. Members unanimously agreed.
- 5.1.5 Ms. Deborah Davis reminded US members that dues notices will be send out in March 2017.
- 5.1.6 Dr. Neal McCrillis made a motion to maintain \$200.00 USD as annual dues for next year 2017-2018 and if at the summer meeting membership decide to increase the dues then it will be increased to \$300.00 USD for 2018-2019 and thereafter. All members unanimously agreed to the motion.
- 5.1.7 Dr. Bonnie Higginson moved for the acceptance of the US treasurer's report, seconded by Dr. John Kemppainen. Membership unanimously agreed.

**5.2 BZE TREASURER/COBEC SECRETARY**, Mrs. Marie Scott-Young, reported that the financial report was inclusive of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 to December 30<sup>th</sup> 2016. Expenses shown were bank charges, ATLIB outstanding cheque, and travel allowance for the chair and secretary. The bank total was \$3000.00 BZ.

5.2.1 Dr Saunders motioned for an adjustment of the BZ Membership dues from \$200.00 BZ to \$300.00 BZ but that final decision and voting be done at the COBEC summer meeting 2017. Dr. Saunders explained that at the summer meetings the attendance is very poor so she would circulate this information sometime next week to ensure that Belizean institutions have the discussion at their board levels. All agreed to this motion. It was suggested for members to do proxy voting on-line if they were unable to attend the summer conference 2017.

5.2.2 Mrs. Jane Bennett moved for the acceptance of the BZ Treasurer's report, and seconded by Dr. Eve Aird. All members were in favor of the report.

## **6.0 ELECTIONS OF US MEMBERS**

The US caucus reported that Dr. Emilia Hodge was the US Co-chair and Dr. Ivan Nikolov was the US Treasurer.

## **7.0 REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES**

7.1 **College Fair Committee (C-FACT)** Mrs. Jane Bennett reported that the college fair at the ITVET as well as the fair in San Ignacio were both well attended. It was agreed that the time for the ITVET fair would remain the same (3:00 pm to 6:00 pm). It was suggested that the host institution be asked to continue to provide transportation to the conference venue after the Belize City fair. Depending on the venue and whether it made sense to have a second fair,



it was suggested to start at 4:00 pm instead of 3:30 pm to allow for more conference time. Ady Burgos volunteered to send out the communication about the fair. Emilia Hodge will provide her with the appropriate correspondence and timeline for communication.

7.1.0 Dr. Emilia Hodge asked for membership to be raised hands if they agreed on the two days of college fair and majority raised their hands in agreement.

7.1.1 Ms. Deborah Davis motioned for the standing conference planning committee be constituted of Co-chairs, outgoing host and new host. The motion was supported by Dr. Ivan Nikolov and seconded by Mrs. Jane Bennett. All agreed.

7.1.2 It was suggested for the committee to make the recommendation of whether or not we would have one college fair or two colleges in Belize and if the college would be on Thursday or Friday.

**7.2 College Administrators/Faculty Experience (CAFÉ):** Dr. Sharmayne Saunders reported that this year featured three workshops at café: (a) *Faculty role in QA* by Dr. Carly Wynne, (b) *Tertiary education and the law* by Magistrate Fraser, (c) *Creating a culture of continuous improvement* by Dr. Susan Syverud. Additionally, trainings took place in Belize City and Dangriga in reading and andragogy: teaching strategies from tertiary. Dr. Saunders mentioned that COBEC's faculty experience has also expanded to the Association of Tertiary level Institutions in Belize (ATLIB) summer professional development training session.

**7.3 Study Abroad Committee:** Dr. Nancy Adamson reported that those attending the meeting had a variety of interest in academic and learning partnerships that extended beyond the traditional definition of study abroad. They included: a) working institution to institution with the Belize Ministry of Education; (b) working institution to institution with individual college and university members of COBEC; (c) bringing faculty-led student groups from a wide variety of disciplines to Belize for a study abroad experience; (d) finding opportunities for North American students to do internships or participate in service learning opportunities in Belize; and (e) facilitating research by partnering COBEC North American and Belizean faculty.

7.3.1 Dr. Kathalenna Edward-Monds agreed to draft a template to capture data about existing study abroad activities in Belize (including MOUs, trips, partnerships, areas of interest for the future) to allow for greater participation between COBEC members. The chairs of the Study Abroad Committee would work with Dr. Monds to collate the data and make it available to COBEC.

7.3.2 The Chairs agreed to circulate the mission for the Study Abroad Committee and the "best practices" document to the attendees.

7.3.3 A suggestion was made to the Summer COBEC host, Madison Area Technical College, to include 3-4 presentations showcasing what COBEC members are doing in Belize (in a variety of areas such as education, health, science/engineering, environmental) at the Summer COBEC meeting.

## **8.0 COBEC MEMBERSHIP**

8.1 A suggestion was made to review and revise the by-laws as it pertained to the introduction of individual membership.

8.2 A motion was made by Dr. Warren Hodge to create an Adhoc committee to study the membership and seconded by Dr. Bonnie Higginson. Five (5) institutions agreed and Twelve (12) institutions did not agree. Membership did not agree to revise and revisit the membership status.

## **9.0 REGISTRATION FEES AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT**

It was suggested that this point be discussed at the next COBEC conference in summer 2017.

## **10.0 AWARDS CYCLE AND PROCEDURES**

No report presented

## **11.0 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS (Full and Associate)**

No application presented for approval or consideration.

## **11.0 EMERITUS NOMINATIONS**

No emeritus nomination presented

## **12.0 NEXT COBEC CONFERENCE MEETING**

Summer 2017 – Madison Area Technical College 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Winter 2018 – Wesley Junior College (tentative)

## **13.0 FOUNDING CHAIRS RECALLED OUR EARLY COBEC HISTORY**

**13.1 Mr. Earnest Raymond** recalled that COBEC started in 1988 with a small group and now the number of tertiary institutions in Belize has grown to thirteen (13) and the US institutions has increased to more than nine. He mentioned that COBEC has economically provided support to tertiary level education in Belize. He recalled that the programme was initiated in 1987 initiative when at BELCAST with Mr. Mahung, the then president, who drew his attention to the fact that there was a US grant program that was intended to help Belize and he wanted to ensure that Belize benefited. At that time there was the restricting of tertiary education in Belize. Belize College of Arts, Science and Technology (BELCAST) was terminated and the University College of Belize (UCB) and other institutions were developing. He mentioned that he was the principal of the Teachers college and Dr. Colville Young worked with him to continue the forward thrust of teacher education. He recalled working with Dr. Cynthia Thompson and Dr. Colville Young to make sure the institution served the community. He explained that it was a USAID programme with Dr. Betty Flinchum, Dr. Tracy Harrington, and Pritchly Smith who assisted by providing some solution to help to improve teacher education in Belize. He continued to say that in the later part of 1988 they visited various US institutions to express Belize's desire for assistance. On their visits they collected books and received assistance in developing course outlines tailored to Belize. He recalled that Dr. Peterson along with Betty Flinchum came up with the idea to establish some kind of a relationship with tertiary level institutions in Belize. He called Dr. Betty Flinchum the "mother of the organization" and she was the one who pushed and organized all the faculty exchanges for the various programs. He mentioned that Dr. Pritchly Smith also helped with the formation of the organization. Mr. Ernest Raymond elaborated that COBEC has and will continue support of tertiary education in Belize, with a possible focus on accreditation concerns. He expressed his pleasure to be at the conference and his happiness for the continued growth of COBEC.

**13.2 H. E. Sir Colville Young** declared that it gave him great pleasure to welcome COBEC US members to Belize and he was impressed with how the "mustard seeds" had grown into what it is today. He mentioned that Belize has benefited enormously from COBEC and he remembered going to the tomb of one of the Caribbean Countries (CARICOM) Nobel laureate who had won

the Nobel Prize in economics and the inscription on his tomb stated: “The best remedy for poverty is not money but knowledge”. And H.E. Sir Colville Young said that this why COBEC was so important in educating our young people and educating them in such a way that they could come back to Belize and add meaningfully to its growth and development. He ended by thanking US partners for “teaching” Belize, as well as “learning” from Belize.

**13.3 Dr. Betty Flinchum** mentioned that we belong to an organization that is unique and solid and that it represents the best goals, so in addition to having a great trip to Belize we have to also be dedicated and have a purpose. She explained that it had been an honour and privilege to have met all the Belizeans that she loves so much. She elaborated that US institutions have not only educated, but have nurtured young lives and that over 70% of the candidates returned, which she mentioned was unprecedented and really valuable. She explained that we belong to an organization which had made significant contributions to education in Belize. The quality of tertiary education in Belize was validated because COBEC initiated and articulated agreements with schools which allowed students from Belize to get their credits accepted allowing them to move into degree programs without having to repeat any courses. She explained that this was an indication of Belizean students’ quality of work and their achievement.. She shared that when they began the partnership Belizean institutions, except St. John’s College, did not have a catalog and she assisted with the desk top publishing of those documents for the other institutions. She recalled that later on each institution brought a catalog to the COBEC meeting for the general body to help review. Dr. Betty Flinchum recommended that the same COBEC representative be present at every meeting for continuity. In addition, she suggested that time been allocated during the COBEC conference for members to share what is happening at their institutions to encourage networking and collaboration. She finished by mentioning that COBEC is a rich institution with over 27 years of existence and a wonderful organization that we should be proud to be a part of.

**13.4 Dr. Cynthia Thompson** recalled in the 1980’s when she returned from her graduate studies in New York and shortly after became vice-principal at the Belize Teachers College (BTC) where Mr. Raymond was principal. She became principal a year and a half later when Mr. Raymond left to take up a bigger role as the chief education officer and she carried COBEC forward in his vision. She explained that Mr. Raymond, now at the Ministry of Education, supported and helped to push COBEC forward. Dr. Thompson recalled that in the early years of COBEC, it was a research grant that brought them together, yet that was one of the areas that has not seen growth in terms of collaborative research and grant writing. However, she explained that those grants were no longer available for Belize. In her closing statement she recalled that the first executive committee comprised of herself the secretary and Co-chairs were Dr. Betty Flinchum and Dr. Colville Young. After that she served as Co-chair along with Dr. Tracey Harrington. She mentioned that COBEC has done a lot and can do much more but we need to focus and plan.

**13.5 Dr. Eve Aird** recalled her earliest memory of COBEC before 1990 when she joined the University College of Belize (UCB) and met Dr. Betty Flinchum, Dr. Tracey Harrington and Pritchey Smith around 1984-1985 when they visited Dr. Mahung at BELCAST. She mentioned that she had the privilege, whilst at the meetings at UCB, to work on the articles of the association and participated in discussions about the vision for what this organization could be. She explained that she collaborated with UNF College of Education and Human Services for them to offer aspiring Belizean Principals of Secondary School a leadership programme for them to meet the standards of the new rules and regulations that Mr. Raymond’s ministry was working

on at the time. She added that Dr. Pritchey Smith of UNF considered doing a master in education and later Dr. John Kemppainen came down and registered some fifty plus high school principals at a cost of \$13,000.00 BZ with text books included. That programme continued for years after then eventually evolved into an online programme. She recalled Dr. Warren Hodge as one of the principal professors who worked with the programme and she remembered his robust methods course that he taught to the principals. Dr. Aird explained that she has always experienced collaboration when she comes to the conference and she believed that Galen can benefit from COBEC. She concluded by stating that Dr. Betty Flinchum once said to her, “Eve I am putting COBEC in your hand” now she also said, “Emilia and Karen I am putting COBEC in your hands, so lead us”.

#### **14.0 ADJOURNMENT**

14.1 Dr. Martin Cuellar extended his gratitude to Galen’s family for all the work and especially to Mrs. Virginia Vasquez for her support.

Dr. Karen Martinez and Dr. Neal McCrillis thanked Dr. Aird, Dr. Cuellar and the working team for all the hard work and a job well done.

14.2 At 1:28 a motion to adjourn the business meeting was made by Dr. Sharmayne Saunders, and seconded by Mr. Victor Vega. All members agreed.

Recorded by,  
Marie Scott Young  
COBEC Secretary