



COBEC Summer Conference
University of Texas at Tyler
Zoom Online Platform
Thursday, 23rd July 2020

Partnerships: Learning and Service for Higher Education

COBEC Standing Committees Report:

Attendance:

Name	Organization/Institution	Name	Organization/Institution
Allison Martin	Bossier Parish Community College	Andy Novobliski	University of North Georgia
Fermin Magaña	Sacred Heart Junior College	Eleanor Gillett	Wesley Junior College
John Kemppainen	UNF/Emeritus	Rita Curtis	Campbellsville University
Betty Flinchum	UNF/Emertius	Jeanne Garbutt	Ministry of Education
Allison Martin	Bossier Parish Community College	Noel Carballo	Corozal Junior College
Steven Gun	Murray State University	Yianira Oliveras-Ortiz	University of Texas at Tyler
Neil McCrillis	University of Illinois Chicago	Javiola Aragon	Ministry of Education
Emilia Hodge	University of Florida	Hugo Gonzalez	Escolar Centro de Mexico
Karen Martinez	Ecumenical Junior College	Sharmayne Saunders	University of West Indies Open Campus
Marie Scott Young	Independence Junior College	Gustavo Ellis	San Pedro Junior College
Eve Aird	Galen University	Warren Hodge	Emeritus Member
Marlon Brown	Corozal Junior College	Noel Carballo	Corozal Junior College
Ivan Nicolov	Valdosta State University	Wes Hickey	University of Texas at Tyler
Sharon Hundley	Campbellsville University		

1. **College Fair Committee**

The College Fair is most likely be held online according to Ms. Aragon. The plan is to reach out to the tertiary institutions and students with the purpose of determining interest in US degrees and programs which will be done by the end of September. Also, the Ministry of Education will conduct some research and match those interests with participating US universities. It was suggested that the participating US universities prepare a video that introduces their programs. It is also likely that the times for the College Fair may be staggered and held on multiple dates.

2. **Café Committee**

The Committee discussed the possibility of having an in-person Winter conference. However, it is unlikely that may be possible as a result of the present circumstances. Given the challenges with online learning, several areas of development were identified to address deficiencies such as tools and techniques for engaging students online in particular Mathematics and Science, and conducting meaningful assessments online. Four US institutions volunteered to assist: Madison College, Valdosta State University, University of North Florida and Campbellsville University. Finally, it was suggested that the Committee laisse with Mr. Gonzalez to start preparing for an online Winter conference event.

3. **Study Abroad Committee**

The new Co-Chair for the Committed is Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz, UT at Tyler. Yanira replaces Stacey Adams who retired. The plan to revive and rebuild the data base of the COBEC institutions was put aside due to the COVID-19 challenges. The intention for the next conference is to share study abroad programs of interest, faculty and student collaborations, international virtual exchanges and collaborations, and standards for study abroad. Finally, request was made to build and support counsellors at tertiary institutions through student-faculty exchanges.

4. **Action Research Committee**

Dr. Hodge facilitated the session. Two issues previously raised in the winter conference were discussed. Dr. Martinez informed that Valdosta has been experiencing issues with the website and that another institution is considering hosting the COBEC website. Dr. Nicolov asked that Deborah be informed of the development. Dr. Klima agreed to share within a month a document on writing a how to model.

Dr. Carballo informed that there is an interest and need for action research. However, the support mechanisms are lacking. It was suggested that institutions build on action research by providing training, and identify the requirements needed in an introductory to research course. There is also the need to survey teachers' interest in action research. Mrs. Garbutt accepted to take the initiative to carry-out a Needs assessment survey for the country.



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Partnerships: Learning and Service for Higher Education

Business Meeting:

Attendance:

Name	Organization/Institution	Name	Organization/Institution
Andy Novobliski	University of North Georgia	Roberto Canche	San Pedro Junior College
Fermin Magaña	Sacred Heart Junior College	Eleanor Gillett	Wesley Junior College
John Kempainen	UNF/Emeritus Member	Rita Curtis	Campbellsville University
Betty Flinchum	UNF/ Emeritus Member	Jeanne Garbutt	Ministry of Education
Allison Martin	Bossier Parish Community College	Noel Carballo	Corozal Junior College
Steven Gun	Murray State University	Yianira Oliveras-Ortiz	University of Texas at Tyler
Arnold Stuenkel	Ecumenical Junior College	Javiola Aragon	Ministry of Education
Emilia Hodge	University of Florida	Hugo Gonzalez	Escolar Centro de Mexico
Karen Martinez	Ecumenical Junior College	Sharmayne Saunders	University of West Indies open Campus
Marie Scott Young	Independence Junior College	Gustavo Ellis	San Pedro Junior College
Eve Aird	Galen University	Warren Hodge	UNF/Emeritus Member
Marlon Brown	Corozal Junior College	Perla Marin	Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College
Ivan Nicolov	Valdosta State University	Carly Womack-Wynne	University of North Georgia

Sharon Hundley	Campbellsville University	Jeanne Link	Sacred Heart Junior College
Neil McCrillis	University of Illinois Chicago	Noel Carballo	Corozal Junior College
Marlon Brown	Corozal Junior College	Sharon Hudley	Campbellsville University
Geoff Bradshaw	Madison College	Audrey Robin	Invited Guest
Noel Young	Belize Medical College	Larry Daniels	University of Tyler at Permian Basin
Lusiola Castillo	Belize National Library	Froylan Gilharry	San Pedro Junior College
Dereyck Satchwell	Ministry of Education	Wes Hickey	University of Texas at Tyler
Karen Rosenbalt	University of Texas at Permian Basin		

1.0 Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 am by Dr. Andy Novobliski, US co-chair.

2.0 Adoption of Agenda

Dr. Kemppainen motioned that the agenda to be accepted as presented. It was seconded by Dr. Nikolov. The agenda was unanimously accepted as presented.

3.0 Acceptance of Minutes

The following names will be added to the list of attendees:

1. Steven Guns, Murray State University
2. Carrie Klima, University of Illinois, Chicago
3. Lusiola Castillo, Belize National Library
4. Larry Daniels, University of Texas at Permian Basin
5. Kara Rosenblatt, University of Texas at Permian Basin
6. Maria Avalos, University of Texas at Permian Basin
7. Shelly Landreth, University of Texas at Permian Basin
8. Tara Wilson, University of Texas at Permian Basin
9. Jeanne Link, Sacred Heart Junior College

A motion to accept the minutes as amended was made by Dr. Aird and seconded by Ms. Jeanne Link. The corrected minutes was accepted by the majority in attendance.

4.0 Presentation by Audrey Robin, Trust for the Americas in collaboration with the OAS and funded by the US Embassy in Belize

Dr. Novobliski introduced Ms. Robin who was joining the group from France. She informed that she is working on a project with Dr. Saunders, UWI Open Campus. The project is called Transformation for an Open Public Administration in Belize which was launched in 2008. The first phase of the project saw significant contribution in promoting collaboration between government, private sector and civil society resources and network in service delivery and transparency. The second phase of the project focuses in promoting an open government. A steering committee has been created to lead the second phase of the project. A hackathon was organized on the economic recovery in the tourism industry with the collaborators such as Beltraide etc.

For more information on the second phase of the project please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YphFQvzOVmg> or write Audrey at arobin@trust-oea.org.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

5.1 Mini grant proposal

Dr. Nicolov asked that the proposal be tabled at the next meeting given the current situation. He informed that the mini grant proposal intends to give TEIs funding for three (3) consecutive years based on merit, that is, efficiency, delivery, effect, impact. It was also suggested that part of the funding be used to acquire the technology for online collaboration.

5.2 Concept of In-State tuition waiver

It was made cleared that there is no such thing as a COBEC scholarship. It was suggested that each US institution updates its scholarship offer to prospective students on the COBEC website. It was noted that Dr. Emilia Hodge was the first Belize student to receive a full scholarship in the state of Florida.

5.3 Individual membership criteria

Membership agreed to table the individual membership criteria at the next meeting.

5.4 Update on Standing Committees:

- 5.4.1** New venue for Café workshops - Mr. Fermin Magana, new chair of the Café committee, to update membership on new venue to host Café workshops.
- 5.4.2** More Online Collaboration between Belize and US students using new technologies.

6.0 Treasurers' Report

US COBEC Treasurer

Dr. Ivan Nikolov reported that USD \$25,868.76 is at the bank. He is also informed that USD \$75.60 was paid to maintain the US COBEC membership with the Secretary of State. The payment is for two (2) years membership. He also paid USD \$15.60 in postage for registration documents sent to the Feds for Dr. Novobliski and Dr. Hickey. Dr. Novobliski commented that Dr. Hickey reached out for COBEC to apply for federal funding to advance our mission. COBEC is now in a position to serve as a fiscal agent to disburse federal funds. Dr. Novobliski suggested that Dr. Nikolov should reimburse himself the money he paid out on behalf of US COBEC.

A motion to accept the US treasurer's report was made by Dr. Kempainen and seconded by and Dr. Hickey. All were in favour of the report.

Belize COBEC Treasurer

Mr. Brown presented the financial report for the period 1st January 2020 to 31th March 2020. He informed that income generated for the period above was payment of dues from the eight (8) Belize institutions. Majority of the expenses were for bank service charges. At 31st March 2020, the closing balance was at BZE \$8,815.70.

The treasurer's report was accepted as tabled by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Gonzalez. All were in favour of the financial report.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Foreign Exchange

Ms. Aragon commented in yesterday's Standing committee report that students studying in the US may have difficulty obtaining foreign exchange to pay their university bills. As a result, it was suggested that the Belize COBEC partners access formal information from the Central Bank that there is a limitation of foreign exchange and present that information to the finance officers and make arrangements with their universities to clear their bill. Also, it was suggested that the Ministry of Education intercedes on behalf of the students with the Central Bank. Mr. Satchwell commented that there isn't a formal foreign exchange restriction by the Central bank. He also said that the Prime Minister of Belize indicated that Belize has adequate foreign reserves but the local banks had placed restrictions on foreign exchange.

7.2 The Revisit of the By-laws

It was agreed to discuss this matter at the next meeting.

7.3 The COBEC Video

Dr. Flinchum commended Dr. Aird, Mr. Magaña and his team for their support throughout the production of the story of COBEC. It was suggested that the video be uploaded on Youtube.com to get global exposure.

Dr. Novobliski informed that a formal request for a grant to pay for the production of the video was made. The total cost of the production of the video is BZD \$2,390.00 / USD \$1,195.00 which covers cost of rental of equipment, transportation, student support and a contingency.

After some discussion, Dr. Nikolov motioned that total production of the video be paid by the US COBEC partners and from the US COBEC account. Dr. Kemppainen seconded the motion. A majority agreed to support the motion.

Ms. Link was asked to send an invoice to Dr. Martinez who will be forwarded to Dr. Nikolov for payment.

7.4 Expand Provision of COBEC Website

In order to move forward, Dr. Hickey suggested that there the need to have a conversation with Deborah and Ivan to identify the best thing to do. He informed that a research component is needed on the COBEC website to include action research and scholar work. He indicated that the idea is a multi-stage process which may require a small working group. Dr. Aird, Dr. Novobliski, Dr. Hodge, Dr. Hickey, Deborah, Dr. Nikolov, and Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz will convene to start the discussion.

8.0 Application for Emeritus Membership

Dr. Martinez informed that COBEC didn't receive any application for new membership.

9.1 Application for New Membership

Dr. Martinez informed that COBEC received an application for new membership from the University of Texas at Permian Basin which is one of fourteen (14) schools in the University of Texas system. Dr. Larry Daniels, Dean of the College of Education at UTPB, shared that he has been actively involved in COBEC. He also indicated that he has developed an affection for the country of Belize and its people. While in Belize for the winter conference in 2020, he and other colleagues are actively working with Dr. Aird to develop a Master degree program in Literacy. He indicated that Dr. Aird, Galen University and Dr. Hickey, University of Texas at Tyler, are endorsing UTPB application's for COBEC membership.

Dr. Nikolov commented that COBEC needs champions and that Dr. Daniels is one of those champions.

A motion to accept UTPB membership application was made by Dr. Aird and seconded by Dr.

Hodge. The motion was accepted by the entire membership.

10.0 Any Other Business

10.1 UNF Belize Alumni Association

Dr. Kemppainen informed that at UNF a Belize alumni association has been created and that officials have selected. Ms. Bradley is the President of the association.

10.2 American Research Center

Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz informed that UT Tyler submitted a proposal to create an American Overseas Research Center in Belize. A request for funding has been made to the US Department of Education. The goal of the research center is to expand and provide support in the area of research.

10.3 Collaborative Work of Ingrid Alvarado

Dr. Novobliski informed that Ingrid had applied for several grant funding but the COVID pandemic had either slowed or stopped the process. He will reach out to her to get where she is with the grant funding.

10.4 Mid-Term COBEC meeting

Dr. Novobliski asked the membership if they were interested in scheduling a meeting in the next three (3) or four (4) months with the purpose of moving things forward that weren't completed due to the pandemic or wait until the next winter meeting in February 2021. Dr. Kemppainen commented that frequent meetings would be a wonderful idea. After positive feedback from the membership on the idea, Dr. Novobliski motioned that a meeting be scheduled towards the end of October 2020 with the purpose of conducting business and providing updates. It was seconded by Ms. Link. The membership voted in favor of the motion.

11.0 Summer Conference Evaluation

The assessment forms will be sent to the membership. All concurred that the conference planned by Wes and Yanira was exceptional.

12.0 Winter Conference 2021

Mr. Gonzalez, Dean of Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College, informed that his heart's desire is to have the membership at CEMJC. If the circumstances don't permit, an online conference will be planned with the help of Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz.

13.0 Selection of Host for Summer 2021 Conference

The decision was deferred for the October 2020 meeting.

14.0 Heartfelt Thanks to UT Tyler

Dr. Martinez extended warm thanks to Dr. Hickey and Dr. Olivera- Ortiz of the University of Texas at Tyler for planning an exceptional online summer conference. Dr. Novobliski joined in congratulating both Wes and Yanira.

15. Adjournment

At 10:35 a.m. a motion to adjourn the Business Meeting was made by Dr. Kemppainen and seconded by Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz. All members unanimously accepted the motion.

Prepared by,

Marlon Brown
Recording Secretary