

**COBEC WINTER CONFERENCE FEB.2-3, 2012**

**HOST: SACRED HEART JUNIOR COLLEGE, SAN IGNACIO BELIZE**

**VENUE: SAN IGNACIO RESORT HOTEL, BELIZE**

**February 2, 2012**

**PRESENT WERE:**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>INSTITUTION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>INSTITUTION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>INSTITUTION</b>
Sharmayne Saunders	UWI(Open Campus BZE)	Jane Bennett	UWI(Open Campus BZE)	Byron Acosta	Galen University
Deryck Satchwell	MOEY-TPACES	Mimi Chase	University of Indianapolis	Larry G. Daniel	UNF
Mary Schlarb	SUNY-Cortland	Carly Womack Wynne	Gainesville State College(GA)	Henry T. Frierson	UF
Tom Pasquarello	SUNY-Cortland	Sheri Hardee	Gainesville State College(GA)	Warren A. Hodge	UNF
Jeremiah Donovan	SUNY-Cortland	Maryellen Cosgrove	Gainesville State College(GA)	Emilia Hodge	UF
Nancy Adamson	SUNY-Cortland	Brian Gerber	Valdosta State University	Tyron Manering	Murray State Un.
Miguel Montero	Corozal Junior College	Vincent Palacio	University of Belize	Bonnie Higginson	Murray State Un.
Ravey Vellos	Corozal Junior College	Wilma Wright	University of Belize	Tracey Harrington	Bainbridge College
Jose' Mai	Corozal Junior College(ACE)	Abigail McKay	University of Belize	Keith Miser	University of Hawaii at Hilo
DeDe Long	University of Arkansas	Ewart Robateau	University of Belize	Rick Bateman Jr.	SOWELA Tech. Comm. College
Kristian Chervenock	NMSU	William A. Neal	University of Belize	Kirk Armstrong	GCSU
Aline Harrison	Galen University	Thippi Thiagarajan	University of Belize	Martha Bass	University of Mississippi
Betty Flinchum	UNF	Anthony Orego	Centro Escolar Mexico	Kim Shackelford	University of Mississippi
Yuri Patt	Galen University	Hugo Gonzalez	Centro Escolar Mexico	Ismael Hoare	U.B.
G.Pritchly Smith	UNF	Joel Clarke	Belize Adventist Jr. College	Andrea Middleton	U.B.
Marie Scott	Independence Junior College	Amelia Williams	Galen University	Jane Bennett	UWI, Open Campus, Belize
Stephen Coole	Kennesaw State University	Michelle Arnold	Galen University	Karen Martinez	SCEJC
Iyomka Strawn-Valcy	Kennesaw State University	David Leacock	MOEY	Donald Dellow	USF
Gustavo Ellis	San Pedro Junior College	John Kemppainen	UNF	Brenda Armstrong	WJC
Froylan Gilharry	San Pedro Junior College	Winsome Arana	WJC	Dwight Call	Georgia College & State Univ.
Neal McCrillis	Columbus State University	Angel Cal	UB	Shaojile Jiang	Viterbo University

Barbara Gayle	Viterbo University				
---------------	--------------------	--	--	--	--

## 1.0 OPENING CEREMONIES

The Conference was opened with a welcome from Mr. Jorge Aldana, Dean, Sacred Heart Junior College. The National Anthem of the USA was lead by Dr. Larry Daniel and the Belizean National Anthem was lead by Ms. Aidita Arguelles. Mr. Marco Lawrence, Counselor and adjunct lecturer at SHJC led the invocation.

Dr. Eve Aird, President of SHJC and the host school, gave the welcome address and apologized for the absence of Minister Erwin Contreras. Dr. Aird, while welcoming everyone to the conference also gave special welcome to some of the Founding Members of COBEC viz. Betty Flinchum, Pritchly Smith. Keith Miser, Tracy Harrington and Cynthia Thompson. Rick Bateman and Emilia Hodge were also given special mention.

The Co-chairs Dr. John Kempainen and Mr. Jose' Mai gave welcoming messages to the delegates. Mr Mai gave the official welcome to all the delegates. He extended special welcome to those visiting Belize for the first time and outlined the theme of the conference-Higher Education for National Development. He invited the delegates to be involved in the discussions. The Pre-conference activities of the day before were discussed: There were 50 participants for the Counselors' Workshop-most of the participants were high school Counselors. There were 27 participants for the Leadership Workshop. Thanks were extended to the facilitators- Kim Shackelford from University of Mississippi, Neulin Villanueva, Rick Bateman from SOWELA and Amelia Williams from Galen. A plaque was presented to Rick Bateman by John Kempainen (The other facilitators were presented with their plaques the day before.)

## 2.0 PANEL DISCUSSION:HIGHER EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT-MODERATOR:MRS BRENDA ARMSTRONG

### 2.1 THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR-DR. MINERVA PINELO, BELIZE NATURAL ENERGY.

#### STRENGTHENING THE LINK BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORK ORIENTATION: A CORPORATE PERSPECTIVE

The salient points from the presentation are as follows:

- Understanding trends-Business Leaders have a vested interest in ensuring that higher education remains relevant in order to provide the skilled workforce needed.
- New Work Force Reality: employees can find and analyses information
- Key Employability Skills: Communication skills, Interpersonal capacity to learn, technological competence, problem solving, leadership, decision making, understanding diversity, creating and applying new knowledge.
- Knowledge: employers place a high value on the following: Math literacy, Scientific literacy, Technological literacy and knowledge of Global Issues.
- Mastering industry relevant software: e.g. Quickbooks, Linus, Microsoft SQL Server.
- Other important values: Civic responsibility and efficacy, global consciousness, ethical awareness, capacity to take initiative.

In recruiting graduates, the following are very important:

1. Interpersonal communication skills-written and oral
2. Academic qualifications
3. Leadership skills
4. Critical reasoning/analysis skills/problem solving
5. Emotional intelligence

Bridging the classroom to the Labour Market:

- Provide engaging opportunities for experiential learning (live projects)

Eg. History students writing local history for their communities

- Introduce skill training programs
- Integrate skills training programs
- Encourage partnerships with private sector to exchange ideas, research and workplace skills.

## **2.2 THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION BY MR. CHRIS AIRD, CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER.**

### **BELIZE-IMPROVING ACCESS, QUALITY AND GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION IN BELIZE-DRAFT EDUCATION SECTOR STRATEGY 2011-2016**

The main points of this presentation are outlined below:

- Access to Tertiary level Education has to do with the Secondary education completion rate.
- The duplication of programs in junior colleges is of much concern
- Associate degree is terminal for many students

The following questions were also posed to the audience: What should we envision about the state of tertiary education? What should be the level of responsiveness about tertiary education needs? Can the national agenda continue to afford the status quo offerings? The challenges here lie in shifting the paradigm. Mr. Aird cited the situation where Belize Electricity Limited, once believed that they could have depended on vocational and technical programs to provide them with the employees they needed. They ended up training their own employees. He stated emphatically that the educational institutions in Belize should have been able to fill this need.

- Student support financing system does not necessary result in graduates in programs which support national development. How many more graduates in business studies can we afford?
- Areas of interest such as technology are not readily available in Belize.
- Trained teachers at the secondary level are still about 30%.
- Need to ensure that training teachers also means educating teachers; the role of tertiary schools is also important here. We do not want to have teachers who teach the wrong things well. New approach by Ministry of Education to strengthen the delivery of the curriculum in relevant ways to ensure that the contents that students acquire improve the overall performance of the system.
- One component of the education sector strategy is to Improve quality and relevance of education at all levels
- Establishing a program of certification of School Leaders.

COBEC Partners can support the realization of the policy objectives by supporting:

- Capacity development of Teacher Education
- Supporting reading in primary schools
- Local institutions in developing programs for teachers especially at the secondary, including technical /vocational levels, that is not readily available to Belize.

### **2.3 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS SECTION BASED ON LAST TWO PRESENTATIONS.**

- David Leacock: Church-State System allows for the establishment of schools by churches where they see a need, but the establishment is not based on a systematic study.
- Question: Where do the graduates from ITVET go?
- SOWELA has programs of a technological type which would benefit Belize e.g. Aircraft engineering.
- Question as to partnership in social service program e.g. the one in San Mateo, San Pedro. Such partnership allows for exchange of culture etc. Work started by US partners (e.g. in San Mateo) should be continued.
- Interns, volunteers need to get a temporary permit to work in Belize.
- If the ITVETS are not producing the graduates that are needed in Belize, should there be greater collaboration between the ITVETS and Junior Colleges?
- The education department recognizes the issues of access and equity, a new financial formula has been developed for secondary schools.

### **3.0 THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGES BY WINSOME ARANA, DEAN, WESLEY JUNIOR COLLEGE**

#### **3.1 CHALLENGES IN TERTIARY LEVEL EDUCATION IN BELIZE**

The main challenges faced by tertiary level educational institutions are as follows:

- Male enrollment: the 2:1 ratio of females: males is changing, albeit very slowly.
- Programs which attract small number of students need to be concentrated.
- Differently-abled students or students with disabilities: Tertiary level institutions need to be prepared to accommodate them.
- Life Skills in the Curriculum: crowded curriculum often excludes Health studies and Parenting classes. Life skills courses will enhance good citizenship.
- Student Support Services: challenge is to make this relevant to the needs of the students eg. Remedial courses, Child Care services.
- Increased access to tertiary education by non-traditional students. The challenges lie in catering to students who have been out of the education system for a number of years, who are juggling full time jobs, family and studies, and who are wary of new technologies.
- Institutional data: The gathering and analysis of institutional data is important in quality assurance. It is also time consuming and often neglected due to the many roles that administrators need to fulfill.
- Other challenges include: being relevant, access to books/internet, increasing in number of certificate skill courses, the offering of short term skill courses to the community, and diversifying the curriculum.

### **3.2 THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY BY PRESIDENT CARY FRASER, THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE.**

The limit of education brings challenges not relevant in other societies. Investing into the society makes it wealthy. How can educational access be expanded to transform the present situation?

- Tertiary education is central to the transforming process
- Priorities need to be established to clearly state roles in education
- A national policy embracing kindergarten upwards is important
- The expansion of education should lead to the re-thinking of roles between the church and the state.
- Over the last 30-40 years, there has been an exporting of skilled population from the Caribbean region. This has resulted in a net loss to the region. A system needs to be designed to keep this from happening.

### **3.3 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS BASED ON THE LAST TWO PRESENTATIONS**

- If the ITVETS are not producing the graduates that are needed in Belize, should there be greater collaboration between the ITVETS and Junior Colleges?
- The education department recognizes the issues of access and equity, a new financial formula has been developed for secondary schools.
- What efforts are being made to retain the male population in schools?
- Where does non-formal education fit in the educational agenda and national development?
- Collaboration is needed among stakeholders, private sector and educational institutions.

### **4.0 PLENARY: COBEC'S RESPONSE-STRENGTHENING CROSS-BORDER TIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN MEETING BELIZE'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MEMBER INSTITUTIONAL GOALS**

**CO-CHAIRS: JOHN KEMPPAINEN AND JOSE' MAI.**

How can these projections become realities?

- Bilateral cooperation e.g. Between UB and SOWELA, between U.S. Social workers and those in Belize.
- Documentation, keeping of database
- Research collaboration, and sharing of findings
- Newsletter to share what is going on in COBEC
- Website should showcase what is being done by various COBEC institutions in Belize. This would facilitate continuation.
- CCID-community colleges for international development- COBEC may wish to make contact with this group to get in touch with folks who are doing a lot in technical education.
- Suggestion that a Secretariat, even a virtual one should be set up for COBEC and that there be a Ministry of Education representative in it.
- Need for collaboration and sharing between COBEC 2 year Community Colleges and Belize junior colleges.
- Database of activities of COBEC needed as well as Institutional history.

## 5.0 COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

The delegates divided into various committees, to discuss the work of COBEC. The meeting was adjourned following the committee meetings.

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 3, 2012**

**COBEC BUSINESS MEETING**

**PRESENT WERE:**

NAME	NAME	NAME	NAME	NAME	NAME
Sharmayne Saunders	Deryck Satchwell	Tom Pasquarello	Jeremiah Donavon	DeDe Long	Kristian Cherenock
Betty Flinchum	Yuri Patt	Pritchly Smith	Marie Scott-Young	Steven Cook	Iyonka Strawn-Val
Carly Womack-Wynne	Sheri Hardee	Wilma Wright	Anthony Orego	Hugo Gonzalez	Joel Clarke
Michelle Arnold	Byron Acosta	Larry Daniel	Kirk Armstrong	Martha Bass	Kim Shackelford
Ismael Hoare	Cynthia Thompson	Jane Bennett	John Kemppainen	Winsome Arana	Donald Dellow
Brenda Armstrong	Dwight Call	Neal McCrillis	Rick Bateman Jr.	Jorge Aldana	Amelia Williams
Eve Aird	Aline Harrison	Miguel Montero	Bonnie Higginson	Fred Carter	Tracy Harrington
Emilia Hodge	Warren Hodge				

The Meeting was called to order Dr. John Kemppainen. Dr. Aird introduced the wife of the US Ambassador, Mrs. Thummalapally.

## 6.0 PRESENTATIONS

### 6.1 LITERACY PROJECT BY THE WIFE OF THE U.S. AMBASSADOR IN BELIZE- MRS. BARBARA THUMMALAPALLY

Mrs. Thummalapally offered apologies for the absence of her husband Mr. Vinai Thummalapally who is out of the country. She proceeded to describe the Literacy project in which she is involved. This project includes reading, writing and comprehension. It also involves the use of the book 'Pat the Cat'. The Literacy Project is done in collaboration with the MOE's literacy project under Rose Bradley and Carol Babb. The book, Pat the Cat is now published, and is in phases 4 and 5 which involves distribution and training of teachers.

Sharp literacy 2010-2011 Book Project based on the jaguar. Story involves history, geography conservation, reading writing and comprehension, art and beauty. Pat the Cat-story of the jaguar, the only great cat to make his home in the Americas. Students learn the history of the jaguar, how he was important to the Mayas and to Belizeans today. The book is written in both Spanish and English. Children in schools in Milwaukee are also reading this book.

The books can be ordered at [www.patthegreatcat.com](http://www.patthegreatcat.com). The books are published in Milwaukee. The books are being taken into schools by the Peace Corp Volunteers.

## **6.2 PRESENTATION FROM TOM PASQUARELLO FROM SUNY CORTLAND**

### **THE BELIZE SUMMER TEACHER INSTITUTE AT CHAA CREEK**

Chaa Creek has a camp site by the river side, this is where the student teachers stay. SUNY Cortland partners with the MOE to bring Belizean teachers together with those from the USA.

Mr. Pasquarello outlined some of the activities that the students are engaged in eg. Visits to the Belize Zoo-lessons on Conservation and Ecology; Partnerships promoting Environmental Education, sharing resources, use the book Pat the Cat; Medicinal Trails, Rainforest Ecology, Night Walks in the Rain Forest

San Antonio Village United Pentecostal School-Teachers are brought into this school where the U.S. teachers get to see what the school and classrooms are like. Unfortunately the schools are not in session at this time. The students also go into San Antonio Village to see what it is like, they visit the community centre where they meet some of the children and are engaged in cultural presentations. Traditional Mayan methods of farming is taught at Chaa Creek; Other activities include Paddling in the Macal river, visit to Xunantunich.

## **7.0 REPORTS BY OFFICERS**

### **7.1 MINUTES AND CORRECTION TO THE MINUTES OF JULY 2011**

Attendance and 12.0: Rick Bateman Jr. instead of Rick Bateman

4.0 The entire interview can be found on You Tube instead of 'UTUBE.'

12.0 Andrea Lewis Miller spoke about the history of SOWELA instead of Teresa Lewis

14.0 Independence Junior College instead of Independence junior college

The Minutes were accepted by Donald Dellow and seconded by Tracy Harrington and Carly Womack-Wynne

### **7.2 TREASURER'S REPORT**

The U.S. Treasurer's report was presented by Tracy Harrington in the absence of Susan Ralph. Tracy pointed out that with the sum of money present in the account, COBEC members will need to start using some in small grants etc, so that tax will not have to be paid.

The Belize Treasurer's Report was presented by Winsome Arana. She stated that there were no changes in Income and Expenditure since the last report was given at the Summer Conference. She also stated that the signatories on the Belizean accounts were finally regularized.

The Report was accepted by Dan Dellow and seconded by Carly Womack-Wynne

Brenda asked about grant for student of Bainbridge; Guidelines for mini grant was requested.

## **8.0 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **8.1 CAFÉ (College Administrators and Faculty Experience) REPORT BY KIM SHACKELFORD AND RAVEY VELLO**

Attempts will be made to get persons from MAC/Apple-to talk about use of its software for administrators; Attempts will also be made to get reduced prices on iPads especially for Belizean administrators.

The 2012 Café workshop was well attended and participants mentioned how beneficial these workshops were. Participants asked for a continuation of the counseling workshop next year. UWI Open Campus, Belize was thanked for hosting the workshops. Mr. Mai was also thanked for ensuring that the CAFÉ' workshops took place. Eve suggested that maybe the CAFÉ' workshops have found a permanent home at UWI. Carly Womack-Wynne of Gainesville State College asked for permission to get a grant so that the US facilitator who did the workshop on Web 2.0 in Gainesville last summer could come to Belize to collaborate with Mr. Underwood in facilitating the workshop.

The slide presentation of the counseling workshop will be available on line.

## **8.2 COLLEGE FAIR COMMITTEE (formerly CFACT)**

Location of the College Fair is important. It was also suggested that the frequently asked questions such as cost of tuition, what is instate tuition, tuition waivers, scholarship opportunities etc should be printed and given out to students. It was suggested also that the College Fair should remain on Wednesday and the Conference begin on Friday thus giving delegates time to get to the conference site.

The information from the Universities and Colleges at the College Fair could be placed online and on Face Book. Is data being collected from the College Fair? The number of students who are enrolled in U.S. universities as a result of the College Fair, amount of money expended on students in terms of instate tuition, scholarships, number of students who have graduated from U.S. Universities etc.

## **8.3 STUDY ABROAD COMMITTEE- ISMAEL HOARE AND NEAL McCRILLIS**

Ismael Hoare and Neal McCrillis were selected to be the new Co-Chairs of this committee

Objectives of the Committee:

- Best Practices in Study Abroad to be developed-Draft produced last year will be re-examined.
- Outline range of programs available for Study Abroad.
- Develop strategy to increase the interaction between Belizean and U.S. students

Information about what is taking place in this area is to be placed on line; email will be sent out to institutions to get data about the type of Study Abroad activities and the activities in Belize. It is useful to keep track about the number of U.S. students who have been involved in study abroad programs in Belize. The Committee will seek to find ways to enrich the experiences of both the Belizeans and U.S. students. U.B. is working on a 10 day Ecology Program which will be available for U.S. students to attend. This program will be located either at Calabash Caye or another Caye field station. It was pointed out that such programs would need to be advertised to students a year in advance or a minimum of 9 months before the date of the program. UB will also be hosting a similar course on Reef Ecology next year.

## **9.0 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS**

Emilia Hodge, requested that the University of Florida be re-instated as member of COBEC. UB is the official sponsor of this request. Delegates voted for the re-instatement of the University of Florida to COBEC.

SOWELA had also applied for membership to COBEC. Dr. Rick Bateman gave a brief overview of what SOWELA, a two year tertiary level institution, is about. Dr. Cal gave his support for SOWELA. Dr. Eve Aird also expressed the support of SHJC for membership to COBEC she mentioned that Dr. Bateman brings with him the experience of working in Belize as a Dean and



being part of COBEC in the past. Dr. John Kemppainen also expressed support for admission of SOWELA to COBEC. SOWELA was accepted as a member of COBEC.

The University of North Carolina has also applied for membership. They are being sponsored by Galen University, they will be at the next COBEC meeting in the summer in Mississippi.

## **10.0 OTHER BUSINESS**

### **10.1 COBEC LOGO**

Suggestion: The word COBEC should be larger in size.

### **10.2 COBEC WEBSITE**

Volunteers to update the website-Tracy Harrington, Carly Womack-Wynne, Bonnie Higginson, Brenda Armstrong, Jorge Aldana, and John Kemppainen volunteered to work on improving the website.

### **10.3 STATUS REPORT ON ACCESS TO BELIZE BANK ACCOUNT**

The Belize Treasurer gave an update on the status of the Belize account: The account is held at the Bank of Nova Scotia in Belize City. The Co-Chair and Treasurer are both signatories on the account and both need to sign for any transaction to take place.

### **10.4 NOMINATION OF OFFICERS**

Election for new COBEC Officers will take place at the Summer meeting at the University of Mississippi.

U.S. Nominations:

Co-Chair: Rick Bateman Jr., (John Kemppainen nominated later)

Treasurer: Susan Ralph

Belize Nominations:

Co-Chair: Ismael Hoare, Jane Bennett, Jose' Mai

Secretary/Treasurer: Aline Harrison, Joel Clarke, Ravey Vellos.

### **10.5 FUTURE CONFERENCES**

Summer 2012- University of Mississippi

February 2013- San Pedro Junior College

Carly Womack-Wynne is the new documentarian of COBEC

Rick Bateman Jr. voted for the adjournment of the meeting, this was seconded by Don Dellow.

***Respectfully Submitted by:***

***Winsome Arana***