

**COBEC WINTER CONFERENCE**

**HOST-UWI OPEN CAMPUS, VENUE ITVET BUILDING, BELIZE CITY.**

**THURSDAY-FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3-4, 2011**

**Theme: strengthening partnership in education, culture, technology and sports: Existing and future programs within a changing global economy.**

**PRESENT WERE:**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>INSTITUTION</b>
Jill Schulze	Gainesville State College
Al Panu	Gainesville State College
Carly Wynnne	Gainesville State College
Gustavo Ellis	San Pedro Junior College
Froylan Gilharry	San Pedro Junior College
Betty Flinchum	University of North Florida
Susan Ralph	Bainbridge College
Kathleen Kelsey	Oklahoma State University
Angel Cal	University of Belize
Thippi Thiagarajan	University of Belize
Jim O'Donnell	New Mexico State University
Sheree O. Dickenson	Bainbridge College
Daniel Moulton	U.S. Dept. of State
Denise Nisbet	U.S. Embassy/State Dept.
Corinth Morter-Lewis	University of Belize
Nancy Leiva	Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College
Hugo Gonzalez	Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College
Deryck Satchwell	Ministry of Education
Hollis McCollum	Kennesaw State University
Tanya Ruetzier	University of Mississippi
Martha Bass	University of Mississippi
Kim Shackelford	University of Mississippi
Linda Keena	University of Mississippi
Beth Moore	Viterbo University
Rosemarie Modera	Regional Language Centre, University of Belize
Vincent Palacio	University of Belize
John Kempainen	University of North Florida
Jose' Mai	Corozal Junior College
Anthony Sabal	Stann Creek Ecumenical Junior College
Jack Hasling	Valdosta State University
Jane Zanher	Valdosta State University
Karen Martinez	Stann Creek Ecumenical Junior College
Nestor Chan	University of Belize
Davey Vellos	Corozal Junior College (ACE)
Brenda Armstrong	Wesley Junior College

Jasper Lawrence	Independence Junior College
Bonnie Higginson	Murray state University
Tracy Harrington	Bainbridge College
Luis Canales	Murray State University
Dwight Call	Georgia College
Neal McCrillis	Columbus State University
Susan Pham	Viterbo University
Sheldon Samuels	Ministry of Education
Winsome Arana	Wesley Junior College
Miguel Montero	Corozal Junior College
Michael Brennan	Hillsborough Community College
Jorge Aldana	Sacred Heart Junior College
Fermin Magana	Sacred heart Junior College
Jane Bennett	U.W.I. Open Campus, Belize
Ismael Hoare	University of Belize

## **1.0 OPENING CEREMONIES**

Mr. Paco Smith officiated as the Master of Ceremony.

The conference was opened with stirring renditions of the national anthems of Belize and the USA performed by the marching band from the Samuel Haynes School of Excellence.

The invocation was lead by Mr. Derrick Satchwell.

Mrs. Jane Bennett of the UWI Open Campus gave the welcome remarks. Special welcome was extended to the Governor General of Belize, Sir Colville Young and the Minister of Education, the Hon. Patrick Faber as well as the overseas partners. At this time Mrs. Bennett also took the opportunity to share some information about UWI.

### **1.1 Opening Remarks by Sir Colville Young**

Sir Colville Young extended a warm welcome to all the delegates from the USA. He encouraged the purchase of the book 'A Cultural Legacy' by Dr. Betty Flinchum and announced that the proceeds from this book go to the music in schools program.

### **1.2 Opening Remarks by the Minister of Education, the Hon. Patrick Faber.**

The Minister reiterated the undiluted support of the Ministry of Education for COBEC. He went on to explain that a large percentage of the annual Belizean budget has been allocated to education. He expressed gratitude to the COBEC partners for their support in ensuring quality education. The Minister recalled the meeting in Kennesaw where he had requested help from COBEC in training untrained

teachers in schools. On Saturday, January 29, he congratulated the first 117 of 860 primary school teachers who were certified in pedagogy. The Minister also cited this as an example of the collaboration of the Ministry of Education with the COBEC partners. Mr. Gennity, the Ministry representative to the summer COBEC meeting had expressed the desire of the Minister to visit COBEC schools in the USA to meet with the presidents of these schools. The Hon. Patrick Faber explained that he along with Mrs. Babb had visited three institutions since the request was made: Valdosta State University, University of North Florida and Gainesville State College. He feels that serious progress was made and he will be signing a M.O.U. with Gainesville State College so that more Belizean students can go there to train in Early Childhood Education. The aim is to train Teacher Trainers to come back and train others. The Minister singled out Carly Womack stating that she is as a very efficient person to work with. She did the background work to make sure the M.O.U. would be ready for signing this morning. The discussion continues with the University of North Florida and the University of Valdosta for the training of Secondary school teachers and Teacher Trainers. It is hoped that the M.O.U can be signed with these two universities at the next COBEC meeting in Gainesville, Georgia this summer. The Hon. Mr. Patrick Faber closed his remarks by reiterating the commitment of the Government of Dean Barrow to provide quality education for Belizeans. He also thanked COBEC on behalf of the Prime Minister of Belize for giving so many Belizeans the opportunity to pursue Further Education in the United States.

### **1.3 Remarks by Dr. Betty Flinchum**

Dr. Betty Flinchum promoted the second edition of the book on the life of Sir Colville Young. She stated that the book contained many of the speeches and writings of the Governor General and was being sold for \$25.00BZ

### **1.4 Guest speaker, Dr. Cynthia Thompson, Assistant Provost, UB and member UWI Advisory Committee, Belize.**

Dr. Thompson shared about some of the partnerships that have been forged between the U.S. other countries and Belize. These partnerships are not just in the tertiary sector, these partnerships are Alliances that two or more organizations have forged in order to meet a number of goals. Some of the alliances cited are as follows:

- Sports: collaboration between NGO and the community it serves in the Toledo district.
- Culture: NICH is built on the concept of partnership. Over the last 7 years, the partnership has included collaboration with other countries such as Taiwan.
- Education: Relationship with UNF in establishing a Masters program in Educational Leadership; Unique relationship with Kennesaw university where faculty members of UB can study in Kennesaw in Masters and Doctoral programs in turn, students from Kennesaw are supervised as they do direct teaching in Belize; study abroad program has been one way due to the financial restraints many Belizean students; Six students from the university of Maryland were placed in NGO, public and private institutions in Belize to work in various areas of agriculture. At the end of the placement the students made presentations to the students and faculty of UB.

Dr. Thompson then went on to offer some Ideas for strengthening collaboration with COBEC partners. She stated that the Partnership needs not be restricted to education but could be expanded to the following areas: Fine Arts and Expressive Arts, Research, Library studies, Grant Writing and Sports. Dr. Thompson concluded her speech by asking ‘Can we develop projects which would harness the use of social networks such as Twitter and Facebook? Is it possible for a joint endeavor to develop to provide Library Studies where core courses can be done in Belize and the professional courses can be done online in partnership with a COBEC institution which offers this program?’

## **2.0 SIGNING OF MOU BETWEEN MOE AND GAINESVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY**

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Education in Belize and Gainesville State University on the first day of the conference. The Hon. Patrick Faber signed for the Ministry of Education and Dr. Al Panu, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, Gainesville State College signed on behalf of that university. Dr. Carlisle Wynne who has worked in Belize for the past five years also witnessed the signing. The Hon. Patrick Faber: “They are assisting us with the training of our early childhood educators. There is a serious void of trained teachers in our education system in this area and we said to Gainesville ‘Can you help us with this?’ They have agreed to give us scholarships to Gainesville State College. In any given year we can send four students---and that number should not exceed twenty at any time---and these people will be trained in the mechanisms, strategies of early childhood education and then come back and help us to train more of the teachers who are here” Dr. Al Panu: “It’s both the culmination of a good bit of work that has gone on as well as the beginning for what we hope will be a long term, many years of collaboration for years to come.”

## **3.0 PRESENTATIONS**

### **3.1 UNICEF-MS. CHRISTINE NORTON**

Ms. Norton reiterated that Education is a fundamental human right, and encouraged all present that children need to be kept in the centre of things in terms of education planning. She mentioned that children dream of passing the Common Entrance examination in order to get to high school, they dream of going to college, becoming doctors, playing cricket for the West Indies and exploring their world. She also mentioned that one reality of the future is the use of social networking sites in education to bring children together and connect them globally.

### **3.2 US Ambassador to Belize representative-Mr. J. Diffly, DCM, U.S. Dept. of State**

Mr. Diffly began by quoting President Barack Obama: ‘Education is an economic issue, if not the economic issue of our time’. He cited some of the partnership arrangements between Belize and the USA which have been facilitated by the USA. This included the Youth Ambassadors program funded by the US department which allows twelve young Belizeans and their mentors to visit three States in the U.

### **3.3 Youth For the Future-Ms. Christine Smith, director.**

Ms. Smith gave a brief history of the Youth For the Future organization. She mentioned the objectives of this organization as being to enable students to have a voice, to empower young people to realize their

full potential. YFF focuses on youths ages 14 to 29 who are at risk due to their sexual conduct and other type of conduct.

YFF would like to partner with COBEC in the following areas:

- Education-to enable students to attain associate degrees in Sports Therapy and Management
- Music-to enable students to get training in this area
- Art-training of students in Art Therapy
- Youth Workers-training in youth leadership, empowerment and service.
- Program Management-short term courses for staff on program management, data collection and analysis.

In turn YFF could provide the following:

- Field experiences and internships for students.

### **3.4 Mental Health Association- Mrs. Kathy Esquivel**

The mission of the Mental Health Association in Belize is to improve the quality of life for people with mental illnesses through education and removal of stigma. In 1998, the organization was successful in decriminalizing attempted suicide. The annual conference for mental health professionals is scheduled for June30-July 1 2011. Theme: Strengthening the educational system in Belize.

### **3.5 ITVET- Mr. Kenroy Ellis, Manager, ITVET, Belize City**

Mr. Ellis gave an overview of the importance and scope of ITVET. He stated that the institution contributes to lifelong learning. Mr. Ellis went on to show the scope of ITVET and its role in CSME. He showed the implications for workforce development and the role that ITVET plays in this. The specific focus of ITVET includes occupational certification, development of occupational standards and ensuring internal and external efficiency. ITVET target groups include high school graduates, workers seeking certification, groups seeking customized programs and high school students ages 15+.

Partnership-most of the ITVET faculty comes from industry and lack the pedagogical skills in teaching. Upgrading for staff is required through exchanges or otherwise. Mr. Ellis stated that he would like to have a Staff Exchange Programs in replacement of the ACTE attendance. This would include the possibility of taking a group of instructors to a technical institution in the states for a longer time period than one day.

### **3.6 Sports- Mr. Patrick Henry.**

Mr. Henry gave a brief history of Belize's participation in international sporting activities. He mentioned that most of the successful athletes in Belize came from the high schools and that some athletic activities eg. hurdles are not practiced at the primary or high school levels and so students are not prepared to do this at a higher level in terms of representing the country in an international arena.

### **3.7 Teacher Education Update-Mrs. Cecilia Ramirez-Smith, Director, Teacher Education and Development Services.**

Mrs. Ramirez-Smith gave an overview of the history of teacher training in Belize from the advent of teachers' training colleges to the present. The BBTE ( Belize Board of Teacher Education) was legislated in 2010, it has the function of overseeing everything that happens in teacher education. Mrs. Smith described the composition of the BBTE. A Certificate in Education program, which was planned along with the COBEC partners, was launched in 2009 to train teachers in primary schools. The first set of students graduated from this program this year. The emphasis is now turning to looking at the composition of teachers in the secondary schools in terms of their qualifications and then to take action based on what is seen there in terms of the need for teacher training. Mrs. Smith cited the following areas as those in which partnership could develop between the MOE and COBEC. These areas include research to inform planning, student/teacher exchange programs and training opportunities for teachers particularly in areas that are not available locally and professional development for teacher educators. The areas of focus for Professional development for teachers include supervision, andragogy, educational research and instructional technology/distance learning.

### **3.8 Belize Enterprise for Sustained Technology-Mr. Dennis Jones**

Mr. Jones stated that the organization is not as involved in technology as it was 20 years ago. He gave a summary of the state of Belize's economy, educational system, infrastructure and international relationship. In the context of above, Mr. Jones stated that we should secure our food supply, this would include looking at organic agriculture and maintaining our barrier reefs so that we can begin to look at new pharmaceuticals from this source.

### **3.9 Agriculture-Mr. Eugene Waight, Chief Agricultural Officer.**

Mr. Waight listed the goals of the agricultural department of Belize as including food security and increasing foreign exchange earnings. He stated that Belize was sufficient in corn, beans and rice. Corn and beans are exported to Guatemala; Corn meal is exported to Jamaica; New improved variety of plantains introduced in Belize from Honduras. The aim is to help the farmers in the north of the country to diversify from sugar cane into other areas eg. plantains; A proposal is in place to export cattle to Mexico. The Agricultural department is also promoting tropicalised greenhouse- greenhouse modified for the tropics. The aim is to be able to produce vegetables all year round in reasonable quantities. Tropicalised greenhouses will control some of the variables which affect farmers such as water availability and help to reduce the prices of locally produced vegetables. Purple potatoes were introduced in Belize in order to reduce contraband potatoes from Mexico. Carrots are grown in Belize four months for the year, carrots as well as potatoes need cooler climates. Areas for possible Collaboration with COBEC- technical assistance in market studies, internships for students, project proposal development, co-implementer of project, research and development. Contact information: [eugenewaight\\_bz@yahoo.com](mailto:eugenewaight_bz@yahoo.com) website [www.agriculture.gov.bz](http://www.agriculture.gov.bz)

### **3.10 Adult Education- Mr. Sheldon Samuels, Coordinator, Adult Continuing Education.**

Mr. Samuels gave an overview of the work of the Adult Continuing Education Unit in the Ministry of Education. He mentioned the number of schools doing the GED program as well as those doing the one Year Opportunity Program. Needs of the ACE Division in the Ministry of Education: Training in Grant Writing Proposal, and expertise in training Adult Literacy Providers.

#### **4.0 SELF INTRODUCTION OF DELEGATES AND STATEMENT OF THEIR AREAS OF INTEREST.**

Listed below are some of the statements of interest by COBEC partners:

- Vincent Palacio, UB-Interest in developing entrepreneurship and a bachelors degree program in criminal justice.
- University of Mississippi-encouraging students to come to that institution, interest in tourism.
- Hugo Gonzalez, Centro Escolar Mexico-agricultural business program.
- Corinth Morter-Lewis, UB-Training of more faculty members in doctoral programs
- Jim O'Donnell, NMSU-Teacher education and counseling.
- Kathleen Kelsey, OSU-working on cohort doctoral program.
- Cynthia Thompson, UB-wishes to partner in developing student affair.
- Gainesville State College-Building on collaboration on early childhood education; interested in learning about opportunities involving science students.
- Neal McCrillis, Columbus State University-Hoping to develop a program in music and music education.
- Sheldon Samuels, MOE, Belize-Requests assistance in facilitating workshop in Grant Proposal Writing.
- WJC-Requests assistance in setting up associate degree program in Criminal Justice and Sports Management
- Michael Brennan, Hillsborough Community College-would like to re-start Trustee Training.
- Ishmael Hoare, UB- Assistance in developing a framework for School of Graduate studies.

#### **5.0 BUSINESS MEETING**

##### **PRESENT WERE:**

Luis Canales

Neal McCrillis

Jorge Aldana

Bonnie Higginson

Joel Clarke

Tracy Harrington

Fermin Magana

Susan Ralph

Dwight Call

Jasper Lawrence

Hugo Gonzalez

Deryck Satchwell

Nancy Leiva

Tanya Ruetzler

Betty Flinchum

Martha Bass

Jane Zahner

Kim Shackelford

Jim O'Donnell

Linda Keena

Angel Cal

Ismael Hoare

Nestor Chan

Michael Brennan

Susan Pham

Brenda Armstrong

Karen Martinez

Eve Aird

Beth Moore

Miguel Montero

Hollis McCollum

Jose Mai'

Froylan Gilharry

Winsome Arana

Ravey Vellos

John Kempainen

### **5.1 Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order and the delegates welcomed again by Jane Bennett.

The meeting was opened in prayers by, and a chorus led by Brenda Armstrong.

### **5.2 Acceptance of the Agenda**

Tracey Harrington asked that another item be added to the agenda. The agenda was accepted by all.

### **5.3 Acceptance of the July 2010 Minutes**

Corrections to the Minutes-Page 3, 6.1 Columbus State is in Alabama not Georgia.

At Viterbo University, students receive scholarships and not In-State tuition.

The minutes was approved by Beth More and seconded by Martha Bass.

### **6.0 REPORTS**

## **6.1 Treasurers' Reports**

USA- Income: \$453.75; Expenditure:\$1,604.73; Balance in account: \$18,155.25

Belize-Income: \$800.00; Expenditure: \$2,000.00; Balance in account: \$2,154.28

A motion was moved by John Kemppainen that the cost of the CAFÉ' workshop be split between ATLIB and COBEC in a 50:50 ratio. This motion was seconded by Jane Zahner. The motion was carried.

It was also recommended that the COBEC CAFÉ' Workshop be held annually at the spring conference.

## **6.2 CAFÉ Sub-Committee Report-prepared by Adrian Leiva and read by Sharmayne Saunders.**

Seventy Belizean faculty members representing ten Belizean tertiary level institutions attended the CAFÉ'workshop that was held on Feb.2 at the UWI Open Campus auditorium in Belize City. The following topics were presented:

1. *Improve the Performance of Students and /or employees and the Quality of work you assign* by Dr. Jane Zahner
2. *Jump Start to Research* by Dr. Jane Zahner
3. *From Dust Collectors and Meaningless Statistics: the Shift to Utilization Focused Evaluation* by Dr. Linda Keena
4. *Counseling Tips to Effectively Address Non-Academic Issues with Students* by Ms. Jenny Lovell.

The cost of the workshop is approximately \$3,000.00; each institution met the cost of travel by its faculty members. The workshop was considered an overall success. It has met one of COBEC'S goals: to design, develop and implement collaborative programs and activities that address higher education needs through the implementation of short-term programs that target specific professional developmental needs of higher education faculty, staff and administrators.

- A short discussion followed this presentation with the following submissions:  
The decision was taken before to make budgeting for CAFÉ' workshop a budget item and a small grant from COBEC.
- The impact of workshop on the participants and what they are now doing and how they utilize it needs to be assessed. Café committee may work with ATLIB to design some way of measuring the impact the workshop has had on the participants.
- One day is not enough to fully explore the topics presented, more time is needed. It was also suggested that the offerings could be widened with the sessions running concurrently.
- The Media coverage of COBEC meeting was excellent, the media should also be invited to report on the CAFÉ' workshop.

## **6.3 CFACT Committee report-Mr. Miguel Montero**

The COBEC undergraduate and graduate fair was very successful. Martha and Miguel are now the coordinators of this fair. Mr. Mai thanked the coordinators who helped in organizing the fair, including ITVET for providing the venue. Approximately 300 students attended the fair. John thanked Beth Moore for chairing this committee and mentioned that she would be retiring from Viterbo University but not from COBEC (hopefully)

#### **6.4 Study Abroad Committee- Mr. Dwight Call**

The Study Abroad Committee focuses on sharing ideas and best practices. In particular, the committee strongly recommends that US institutions collaborate with and include students from Belize as partners in the academic and cultural programming. The committee met briefly. Neal McCrilis will work with several members on a statement for the website. Susan Ralph will work with Dwight Call in sending out a survey and collating a list of Study Abroad programs for the website. Jorge Aldana agreed to be the co-chair.

#### **6.5 Carlise Womack-Wynne report on use of COBEC grant.**

Carlise reported on the work done in most of the districts in Belize in the training of principals on how to remove corporal punishment in school in order to establish a safe, risk free environment for students. There was initial resistance to the removal of corporal punishment but there has been a paradigm shift in the schools to establish non-aggressive classrooms. Dr. Wynne was asked if there is a way of creating a longitudinal evaluation of the workshops. Carlise said that evaluation is done after each workshop; the data is collected and will be analysed over time. The workshop has mainly been done with the principals and district managers. Request was made for video of the workshop so that it can be shared with teachers in secondary schools as well. Members of the teachers union have been involved in the workshop.

### **7.0 OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **7.1 Website**

Work on the COBEC website was done by Adrienne Hyle of Oklahoma state university in the past. The proposal made for an institution to take the website as a project. Mr. Mai said that he would ask the IT person at CJC to look at the website and he would make a report in the summer. It was also felt that the hosting of the website was too expensive, \$42.00 every three months. The motion was moved by Beth More that we look into this, the motion seconded by Tracey Harrington.

#### **7.2 Articulation Agreements**

Only one U.S. University has articulation agreements with a few junior colleges in Belize. It is necessary to put articulation agreements in place to ensure that students' grades can be transferred easily from junior colleges in Belize to colleges and universities in the U.S. Dr. Angel Cal spoke on this briefly. He shared on the work being done in Belize by the National Articulation Framework in facilitating the transfer of grades from the junior colleges to the University of Belize. It pointed out that the Ministry of Education is very supportive of the project.

### **7.3 Future Conferences**

Sacred Heart Junior College will host the COBEC conference in February 2012. The University of Mississippi offered to host the conference in summer 2012.

### **7.4 Awards and Presentations**

A presentation to Eve Aird and Michael Brennan, former co-chairs of COBEC will be made in summer 2011.

A presentation was made to Beth Moore in consideration of her long, dedicated and distinguished service to COBEC.

### **7.5 Governor General's appeal**

Tracey Harrington shared the Governor General's appeal for uniform for band members in various schools in Belize. Tracey asked that the U.S. partners seek donations of old but functional band uniforms for high band members. Persons who are able to help with this should contact him.

### **7.6 Closing remarks**

Jane Bennett offered thanks for the opportunity to host the conference, and hoped that everyone had had a successful conference. The business meeting was adjourned at 12.10pm.

Respectfully Submitted by

*Winsome Arana*