



COBEC Summer 2013 Conference – August 2 & 3, 2013
 Venue: Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia

Participants (Based on participation in discussions/recall)

Names	Institutions	Names	Institutions
Adamson, Nancy	SUNY, Cortland	Leiva, Adrian	Muffles Junior College
Armstrong, Brenda	Wesley Junior College	Mai, Jose	Corozal Junior College
Armstrong, Kirk	Georgia College & State University	Martinez, Karen	Stann Creek Ecumenical Junior College
Bennett, Jane	University of West Indies	McCrillis, Neil	Columbus State University
Call, Dwight	Georgia College and State University	Miser, Keith	Retired
Davis, Deborah	Valdosta State University	Montero, Miguel	Corozal Junior College
Faber, Patrick	Minister of Education	Satchwell, Deryck	Ministry of Education
Flinchum, Betty	Retired	Saunders, Sharmayne	University of the West Indies (Open Campus, Belize)
Gerber, Brian	Valdosta State University	Shoemaker, Joel	Madison College
Harrington, Tracy	Retired	Sosa-Moguel, Luana	Ministry of Education
Hodge, Emilia	University of Florida	Thompson, Cynthia	University of Belize
Hodge, Warren	University of North Florida	Vellos, Ravey	Corozal Junior College
Kemppainen, John	University of North Florida	Wynne, Carly	
Nikolov, Ivan	Valdosta State University		
Ostroth, David	Bridgewater State University	Young, Marie Scott	Independence Junior College
		Ysaguirre, Joy	Belize National Library Service

1.0 OPENING & WELCOME

The day's proceedings commenced with the singing National Anthems of the USA and Belize. Mr. Brian Gerber introduced Valdosta State University's (VSU's) President, William McKinney, making mention of his vast understanding of how higher education works, particularly on the global stage.

President McKinney then welcomed everyone to VSU. He talked about the world of education outside South Georgia and the need to understand its global connection. He noted that VSU needed to be responsible by preparing its students for that universal perspective since whether we like it or not, the world's commerce, transportation and communication systems are interconnected globally. He applauded

the fact that COBEC has existed for 25 years and stated its significance in creating that universal perspective for students.

2.0 PRESENTATIONS

2.1 PORT LOYOLA GARDEN PROJECT – Mrs. Jane Bennett, UWI Open Campus

Dr. Bennett explained that she was making the presentation to seek a partnership with COBEC for the project. This project's objective was to provide technical, financial and other resources to support families to become involved in growing vegetables. The vision is for low income families to be able to grow their own vegetables. The idea originated with a UWI student and researcher who indicated the need for food among families in the Port Loyola constituency. UWI's role is to coordinate by being a facilitator and identifying resources.

The key stakeholders were the Jane Usher Neighborhood Association and residents. A number of institutions/organizations that are also on board are Restore Belize, Galen University, University of Belize, Cisco Construction, Belize City Council and Port Loyola's area representative. The project would involve an investment of approximately \$300,000 over a 3-year period and funding was being sought from several ministries of the Government of Belize, RESTORE Belize and other corporations, with the funding for seeds possibly coming from UWI. The expected launch date was October 2013.

Questions/Discussion covered the following:

- What was COBEC's role: Mrs. Bennett said she was hoping for COBEC institutions could offer expertise in agriculture or students doing Study Abroad to assist. It was suggested that perhaps the project could be used for Service Learning, similar to the San Mateo project in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye. It could also be used to teach the development of a business and project sustainability. In addition, US members making contact with seed and fertilizer companies as a way of funding was suggested.
- YMCA has agreed to do a greenhouse as part of the project
- High school and tertiary level students in Belize City could accumulate community service hours by volunteering to be a part of the project
- The project could serve to revive the Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP) and be extended into the primary schools in the area
- Extension of the vision to provide more than food and the possibility of this becoming a means of developing the community
- Other potential partners: Farmers Association from Hopkins Village, Mick Flemming from Chaa Creek, the Botanical Garden in Cayo.

Mrs. Bennett thanked everyone for their attention and recommendations.

2.2 TRAINING FOR LIBRARIANS – Ms. Deborah Davis, Sylvester State University

Ms Davis shared that a proposal for library education had been presented to Belize but the proposal was not tailored to meet the needs of librarians in Belize. Those workshops helped her to

see what was really needed and indicated she was willing to take on the challenge of providing the proper training for the librarians.

She Davis suggested the possibility for COBEC institutions to offer a certificate in library training for librarians whether face- to- face or online. The certificate is for 24 contact hours which can easily be met. Ms. Davis explained that the training can be done by professionals in the field presently.

She mentioned that the University of Belize had asked for RDA training, explaining that cataloguing is the most technical applied part of library and RDA is the new way of cataloguing. It was suggested that the University of Belize computer facilities be used as the venue. After some discussion it was agreed that:

- A CAFÉ workshop and EBSCO host training would be done
- Consideration would be given to including Archives
- A Certificate program would be implemented later

2.3 COBEC: A PARTNERSHIP FOR BELIZEAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Mr. Deryck Satchwell, Ministry of Education

Mr Satchwell noted that the interaction should be based on the national development priorities which can be obtained from Horizon 2030, a national development framework for Belize. The Ministry of Education is committed to this task and listed some of the areas prioritized in Horizon 2030: Democratic governance, Education for life, Economic resilience, Healthy citizen and a healthy environment.

He explained that in order to achieve this vision, specific areas of focus would be given attention which were all designed to build resilience against social, economic and physical vulnerability. These were all to be addressed through the Belize Education Sector Strategy (BESS), a reform project currently being undertaken and funded by the Caribbean Development Bank. The three primary objectives of the project were to: Strengthen governance, enhance quality and relevance and Increase access

He observed that each of the areas listed had specific outputs and that a consultancy was attached to each output. COBEC members could consider applying for the various consultancies available such as:

- Strengthening system leadership in regards to the Ministry of Education evaluation of itself.
- Strengthening school management and leadership
- Development of a human resource development strategy
- Strengthening of education strategy M & E system
- Development of disaster risk management plan
- Rationalization of and diversification of secondary curriculum (The linkage of curriculum to national development and public relations are key areas.)
- Development of second language acquisition strategies
- Development of a strategy for the integration of information and communication
- School mapping
- Development of school facilities prototype designs

He especially highlighted the need for publicizing the current collaborations that exist in COBEC, for celebrating the mutually beneficial partnerships. Discussion on the presentation resulted in the affirmations:

- Document COBEC activities, following up on Carly Wynne's suggestion (at Ole Miss conference)
- Add testimonials to COBEC website
- Frame collaborations around the national goals for development in Belize.

3.0 AWARDS

Awards were presented to the following members of the Consortium:

- o Susan Ralph and Deborah Davis for Outstanding Service as Officers
- o Brenda Armstrong for Long, Outstanding Service and Appreciation as she retires from tertiary education

4.0 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Marie Scott Young was **elected** as Secretary/Treasurer (Belize) and Deborah Davis as Treasurer (US institutions).

5.0 EMERITUS STATUS

It was established that at the February 2013 meeting the Consortium had agreed to introduce Emeritus Status to its membership categories. Discussion ensued, highlights of which is provided below:

- Members would have to be nominated using a form/letter; eligibility should not be based on retirement alone but rather on active membership
- Should not be eligible to vote
- Includes exemption from Conference Registration Fee
- Should be included in the By-Laws
- Eligibility to apply for small grants raised varied suggestions

It was **agreed** that a small committee consisting Carly Wynne, Cynthia Thompson and Jose Mai, working with an Emeritus member as consultant, be assigned the task of developing the guidelines for Emeritus Status. The Terms of Reference of the Committee was finalized as:

- To determine the scope and profile of an Emeritus member
- To establish criteria for the approval of an Emeritus member

The section of the Draft By-Laws related to Emeritus Status would be shared with the committee. The deadline for the submission of the Committee was set as November 1, 2013.

6.0 REVIEW OF THE BY-LAWS

The draft of the By-Laws that had been sent to the membership for review was shared by the US Co-chair. Sections of the document were discussed with the following observations/recommendations:

- Membership: It was noted that there was interest from a Canadian institution to join. Non-Belizean members should pay the same fees as US members. Third party membership should be reviewed separately by a committee.
- Some points in the By-Laws fall under Policies, Practices and Procedures and should be extracted and placed in another document

- Valdosta State University, Georgia is listed as the principal office of COBEC
- Addition to the responsibilities of Secretary: to prepare and submit records to the archivist regularly
- The status of Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary was raised particularly regarding their absence from meetings
- An updated list of all institutional members and their representation will need to be forwarded to the membership
- The Procedures Manual would provide details on topics such as fundraising, attendance at meetings

It was **agreed** that a Committee consisting of Kirk Armstrong, Tracy Harrington and Brenda Armstrong be tasked with the responsibility of reviewing the By-Laws and extracting those portions that should be categorized as Procedures and Policies. Deadline for submission of the first draft: December 1, 2013.

The day concluded with discussion on some of the significant contributions of COBEC over the years including:

- The articulation of an agreement with US institutions and Belize, allowing for students to attend the US institutions
- The contribution of several millions through scholarships to Belizean students
- 97% return rate of students to Belize

It was noted that partnerships between COBEC members are sought to develop the expertise of Belizean faculty and ensure the sustainability of Belizean institutions. Assistance can also be provided with publishing and the procedures for applying for grants to fund research.

DAY TWO – AUGUST 3, 2013

The day began with members meeting in Committees. Thereafter the Business Meeting of the Consortium was held.

1.0 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

An application for membership was made by Joel Shoemaker on behalf of Madison Area Technical College (MATC). He shared briefly on the institution's interest in establishing Study Abroad programs with Belizean institutions, including for courses that were already being offered in Belize. It was noted that the official letter from the President of MATC still needed to be submitted. Mrs. Jane Bennett, Head of UWI-OC, endorsed the application. A motion was made by Carly Wynne, seconded by Tracy Harrington to accept the application from MATC. The membership **unanimously agreed**.

2.0 The US Co-Chair reminded the members that two sets of Minutes still needed to be finalized and approved – the Ole Miss and San Pedro meetings. He proposed that both of them, along with the Minutes of the current meeting, be received for approval at the Winter 2014 meeting. The members **agreed**.

3.0 TREASURERS' REPORTS

The US Treasurer, Susan Ralph, reported that at the financial year began with \$23,930.00 US in funds. Expenditure during the year totaled \$4,132.95 (Attorney fee: \$360.00 and CPA fee: \$325.00). The balance at the end of the year was \$25,163.58 which includes deposits of members' annual fees. It was noted that one institution had not paid membership fees.

A discussion on mini grants ensued. A query was made whether one institution could apply for two grants as in the case of the CJC and UWI/National Library project and training facilitation. Dr. Kempennain suggested that two separate requests should be submitted – one for the CJC initiative and the other for the UWI/National Library project. It was also suggested that guidelines for the submission of mini-grant proposals be circulated again.

The Belize Treasurer, Aline Harrison, reported that at the financial year began with \$2,370.97 BZE in funds. Expenditure during the year included \$250.00 for rental of ITVET compound for the College Fair, \$1,375.00 for catering (partially subsidized by ATLIB), advertisement in Amandala newspaper \$506.00, rental of venue from UWI: \$500.00 and Plaques for awards: \$292.50 (to be refunded by US Treasurer). The balance at the end of the year was \$2,348.02 BZE. Only two institutions have not paid their annual fees.

The Belize Co-Chair suggested that a recorder be bought for the Secretary to help with the recording of Minutes. Other free electronic applications that could be used were suggested.

4.0 COMMITTEE REPORTS

4.1 STUDY ABROAD – Dwight Call and Neil McCrillis

Two issues were discussed:

1. COBEC's principles for Study Abroad – The Committee reviewed and made a few minor corrections to the existing guidelines (available on the COBEC website). Tracy Harrington moved for the acceptance of the revised version, seconded by Ivan Nikolai. They were then **accepted** on a unanimous vote.
2. Faculty Development Seminar in Belize – The Committee suggested that a seminar designed to expose both US and Belizean faculty to each other's education system and culture. Suggestions raised included using the seminar to collaborate on doing research, holding a teleconference before the actual seminar. Neil McCrillis recommended that the idea be discussed further in committee and presented to the Winter 2014 Conference for approval. The meeting agreed and named Dwight Call (Convenor), Warren Hodge, Marie Scott Young and Karen Martinez to the sub-committee.

4.2 CAFÉ Report – Joy Ysaguirre and Karen Martinez

The Committee discussed the proposed library project. It would be a certificate program spearheaded by Valdosta and would require five days for delivery. The Library training on RDA will be delivered separately from the CAFÉ workshop. Proposed date for the training: January 29 – February 4, 2014. The CAFÉ session would be held on February 5, 2014 and would focus on three topics: Guidance and Counselling, EBSCO and either Andragogy or Performance Evaluation.

4.3 CFACT Report - Jane Bennett

Ms. Bennett reported that the College Fair is set for 5 February, 2014 at ITVET. The committee suggested that the Fair begin at 3 pm for ease of transportation for students from other districts. It was **agreed** that fair will take place from 3 – 6 pm. The registration fee applies to all institutions whether they attend conference or not. Discussion ensued on changing the location due to concerns from institutions from outside of Belize City. Belize City was agreed as

the central location that works best. Mrs Bennett asked that universities prepare their flag sheets of programs and forward it to Miguel Montero as soon as possible. The need for more tents was noted.

5.0 OTHER BUSINESS

- i. The website has not been updated for over a year. Valdosta has agreed to host the website. Deborah Davis will be in charge of maintaining the site. Members **agreed**.
- ii. Dr. Warren Hodge proposed a resolution that at every conference there be a standard session on how to use technology and how it applies to education. It was seconded by Cynthia Thompson. All voted to **accept** the proposal.
- iii. Brian Gerber rose to recognize Betty Flinchum, Dwight Call, Tracy Harrington, Jane Zahner and Keith Miser for their contributions to COBEC.

John Kemppanien and Jane Bennett extended thanks to Brian, Ivan and Deborah for the efficient hosting of the conference. The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Carly Womack, seconded by Ivan [Nikolov](#) at 11:59 a.m.

Edited by,
Brenda J. Armstrong