

Report on Robin C. Botes' St Louis, Missouri Visit 14 July, 2005

Background to my visit to UMSL and the Missouri Leadership Academy

My visit to UMSL was planned as part of the reciprocal visits and discussions that had been taking place between the University of the Western Cape and the University of Missouri, St Louis since 2000- the most recent visit having resulted from a proposal that was submitted to the UMSAEP Committee on July 11, 2003.

In April 2005, two members of the UMSL faculty of Education, Dr Carole Murphy, Chair, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELAPS) and Dr Carl Hoagland, Emerson Electric Company Endowed Professor for Technology & Learning and Director of the E. Desmond Lee Technology and Learning Centre together with a doctoral student, Osman Ozturgut, Graduate Research Assistant (ELAPS), traveled to South Africa for the purpose of writing grants to support the initiation of the Academy.

Dr Hoagland was willing to pay his own expenses to South Africa because of his interest in the project. His addition to the team was important since he has a successful record of grant writing and more especially because of the valuable input he would make in the Academy with regards to Technology, a skill which the South African principals so desperately need.

During this visit, it was decided that I should visit St Louis in order to work with the St Louis Principal's Academy and the DESE Leadership Team. This was planned for the US summer of 2005 when one State Leadership Academy is ending and another is beginning. The suggested dates were May 2005 through July 2005.

Dr Doug Miller, Director of the Missouri Satellite Leadership Academy had further invited me to attend the summer Satellite Academy meeting at the Lake of the Ozarks. This provided a great opportunity for me to participate in the Missouri Academy that was selected in 2004 by Stanford University as the second best professional development program for principals in the United States.

The UMSAEP team had been working on this project since 2000. There has been much research, consultation and numerous exchanges to create an awareness of the need for a Leadership Academy specifically in the Western Cape- with a co-ordinated strategy of

rolling it out to the rest of South Africa. A proposal had been compiled by the Steering Committee of the Academy that had not only assisted us to gain the support of most stakeholders, but had also brought us close to finalizing a formal partnership between UWC, with Prof Herman as the UWC Project Leader, and a major South African funder. This proposed partnership would provide a facility to house the Academy on the campus of UWC.

The following roles on the Management Committee have been identified in the proposal:

- Prof Herman will be responsible to the University for the effective running of the project in line with the University's policies for project management, for the negotiation of physical accommodation of the project at the UWC or elsewhere, as well as accountability, financial or otherwise through the Office of the Dean of Education.
- The Education Manager of the funder will act as Project Leader for the funder and represent them on the Management Committee.
- The Dean of the Faculty of Education and the Executive Director of Finance of UWC will represent Senior Management of UWC on the Project and provide financial control of project funds.
- Dr Clarence Williams will be the Co-ordinator of Leadership and Management programmes in the Faculty of Education at UWC.
- As a local school principal, I have been identified to be seconded to serve as Interim Director of the Academy to head the project for a year until a longer term contract appointment is made.

The Focus of my visit

Knowing that South African principals generally receive no preparation and little support for their leadership roles in education, I undertook this expedition hoping to discover what the State Authorities and Educational Fraternities in Missouri and Ohio were doing with regards to training and developing their school principals.

Administrators in South Africa face difficult and complex problems. Over-crowding of schools, lack of adequately-trained educators, lack of financial support, physical resources that are in many instances below acceptable standards, lack of adequate learner support materials and resources, health issues such as AIDS, and moral decay in

communities are but a few of these problems. In addition crime and AIDS have become major issues for many schools (Herman, 2000).

Because of these problems, experienced school principals in poor areas had, just prior to the dawn of our new democracy in 1994, left the profession in large numbers. In an attempt to provide support and professional development for these administrators, the vision of a Leadership Academy was born in 2000 when Prof Harold Herman, former Dean of the University of Western Cape's Faculty of Education, was invited to participate in the Missouri Satellite Leadership Academy. After his participation, Prof Herman felt that creating a Leadership Academy in South Africa would provide the support that school leaders currently need. The timing for such a facility for our school leaders is opportune right now because of growing interest in aid to the African continent for Education, AIDS education and economic development by both Great Britain and the United States of America.

Interviews and Conversations

I was able to visit and talk extensively with the following key people who helped to inform my understanding of how school principals are equipped to perform their duties as leaders and managers efficiently:

- Faculty of Education- University of Missouri, St Louis
 - Dr Charles Schmitz, Dean
 - Dr Joel Glassman, Director, Centre for International Studies
 - Dr Carole Murphy
 - Dr Lynn Beckwith, Endowed Professor of Urban Education and former Superintendent of St Louis Public Schools
 - Dr John Ingram
 - Dr Thomas Hensley
 - Dr Peter Wilson
 - Dr Gwendolyn Turner
 - Dr John Henske
 - Dr Paulette Isaac-Savage
 - Osman Ozturgut
- Faculty of Education- University of Missouri, Kansas City
 - Dr Loyce Caruthers
 - Prof Jerry Waddle
- St Louis University

- Dr Bev Nance
 - Dr Scotty Scott
- E. Desmond Lee Technology and Learning Centre at UMSL
 - Dr Carl Hoagland and his whole staff
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
 - Dr Douglas G. Miller, Director of Professional Development
 - Gary Manford, Assistant Director
- St Louis Regional Professional Development Centre at UMSL
 - Dr Dennis Dorsey, Director
 - Dr Wayne Walker, Associate Director
- South Central Regional Professional Development Centre
 - Terry Hopgood, Assistant Director
- Parsons Blewett Memorial Fund
 - Mr Thomas M. Stenger, Administrative Director
- Local School Principals
 - Clarence Ward at Simmons Elementary
 - Sharonica Hardin at Adams Elementary
 - Gustava Cooper-Baker at Sanford B. Ladd Elementary
 - Sheppard Pittman at Gateway Magnet and
 - Travis Brown at Beaumont High.
- Alderman Jeffrey Boyd of 22nd Ward, St Louis
- St Louis Rotary Club
 - Austin P. Tao, Architect
 - Rodney K. Kerner, Vice President, The Commerce Trust Company
- Local Church Leaders:
 - Pastor Robert Strong at Kossuth Church of God in Christ
 - Reverend at Trinity Presbyterian Church in St Louis
 - Reverend at the First Baptist Church in St Charles
 - Dr Ronald J. Fowler, Dr Diana Swoope and Lawrence Swoope at Arlington Church of God in Akron, Ohio
- International Network of Principal Centres
 - Dr Phil Hunsberger, Executive Director
- Akron Public Schools
 - Dr Sylvester Small, Superintendent
 - Vivian Neal, Director of Knight Foundation
 - Mary B. Outley-Kelly, Executive Director, Elementary Education, APS
- Akron University lecturer

- Dr Colleen Curry
- Anderson University, Indiana
 - Dr James Edwards, President
 - Dr Alyssa Beverly. Dean of School of Adult Education
- Church of God Association of Northern California
 - Dr Cynthia D. James, Executive Director
- Bay Ridge Christian College, Texas
 - Dr Stanford Simmons, President

Funding

After having worked with the UMSL team (consisting of Dr Carole Murphy, Dr Carl Hoagland and Osman Ozturgut) and UWC team (consisting of Prof Harold Herman, Dr Clarence Williams, current Course Co-ordinator for the Masters programme (EMAP) at UWC, Mr Melvyn Caroline, Director of Education and four school principals, including myself) to identify numerous grants that would be suitable to fund the Academy project, I had realized that securing funding was crucial to the success of our Academy. I was however not aware though, of the extent of funding arrangements and partnerships between State organs (like DESE), tertiary institutions (like UMSL and SLU), Foundations (like Parsons Blewett), Corporations (like Kellogg's) etc, that was necessary for the Missouri initiatives to succeed. I regard this as one of the major challenges that we will face when we set up our Academy.

The funding opportunities and resources that Dr Murphy (TELP), Dr Hoagland (E. Des Lee Endowed Professorship) and Dr Beckwith and Mr Stenger (Parsons Blewett) were able to secure are indeed highly commendable. These colleagues' expertise and experience in this regard will be invaluable for our Academy. Establishing and maintaining a sound relationship/partnership with these individuals should be high priority for us- especially in the light of our South African economic situation.

Preparation of School Administrators in Missouri, Indiana and Akron.

Education leaders in these three states are essentially prepared on three levels. All three these levels are interlinked.

- **Academic preparation**

School Principals here would generally have attained a Masters Degree in Education before being appointed in an administrator's post. I have not come across or heard of one principal who did not have a M Ed.

- **Certification for Principalship**

It is a State requirement (in most States) that principals first complete the certification programme that is based on the ISSLIC Standards. In this respect provision is also made for the certification of educators who are aspiring to become school principals. Dr Doug Miller, in the Missouri Leadership Academy as well as Dr Beckwith in the Leadership Academy for St Louis Public Schools and Dr Sylvester Small in the Akron Public School District provides for training cohorts from this sector.

- **Participation in the programmes of the Leadership Academy**

Opportunities are created and invitations extended for school principals to attend a one or two year leadership programme (elementary and advanced) that is designed to develop them on a continuous basis as leaders and managers of their schools.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC): Standards for School Leaders

The ISLLC Standards was developed to provide "a thorough, fair and carefully validated assessment for states to use as part of the licensure process for school leaders". This assessment instrument is based on a job analysis which was done on a national basis and a set of standards for school leaders identified by ISLLC. The ISLLC standards thus form the basis of the assessment of school leaders.

The ISLLC standards serve a threefold purpose:

- To raise quality standards within the profession
- To provide useful information for decision-making on a wide variety of topics
- To promote collaboration among the states, either collectively or in smaller groups.

The ISLLC standards for School Leaders, are the following:

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by

1.

2. Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community;
3. Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional programme conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
4. Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
5. Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and need, and mobilizing community resources;
6. Acting with integrity, dignity, and in an ethical manner;
7. Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and political context.

Each ISLLC standard focuses on three sub-divisions viz. Belief, Knowledge and Implementation and underpin most, if not all, of the leadership development that occurs within these States.

Each state must determine a “passing” score for all candidates who wish to obtain a license to practice as a school principal or administrator.

The Leadership Academy

The St Louis Principal’s Academy is a year-long study and hands-on professional development opportunity for school administrators from the St Louis region. Besides individual and group study and skill-building time, facilitators and fellows of the Academy which include former Superintendents and successful school principals, are required regularly to facilitate the activities of the Academy. Selection of Academy fellows is based on demonstrated leadership as well as diverse representation of the area that the Academy serves. The St Louis Principals’ Academy provides fellows with a multiple of leadership development opportunities. Two striking features of the sessions that I attended at the Lake of the Ozarks was that the women were in the majority by far and that there was only approximately 15-20% black participants, both in the facilitators group as well as the participants group.

Dr Doug Miller, Dr Carole Murphy, Gary Manford, Paul and Susan and the rest of the team are doing excellent work in providing top quality programmes and resources for the school principals’ development. The most striking feature to me was the extent to

which the Academy had not only created a space for conversation among school principals, but the extent to which these principals had become friends who were available for one another for whatever need may arise in the execution of their duties.

I participated in conversations around the tables where clearly younger and less experienced colleagues exchanged new initiatives, ideas, advice, support and alternatives with more experienced ones. I witnessed professional and emotional capital etc. shared amongst friends who were about their common tasks- being school

principals and administrators. This would be a major positive boost to the morale of our local principals who very rarely meet for reasons other than task-related activities which invariably adds to their stress levels rather than help to relieve stress.

I did not attend or interact with participants of the Academies in Indiana and Akron, but was fortunate to be asked to address all the groups in the various sessions at the Lake of the Ozarks about my experience as school principal and our plans for the establishment of our own Academy. At the first session with the group of about 35 facilitators that were responsible for the Missouri Academy's activities, I informed them of the situation we experience as principals of schools in the disadvantaged communities of Sarepta, Wesbank, Delft, Khayalitsha and the rural areas of our country etc. I spoke of class sizes in proportion to staff establishments, physical and other resources and the inequalities that exist in a cross-section of our schools- advantaged and disadvantaged focusing primarily on the need for our school principals to be adequately trained on a continuous basis. Although it was 15 June in the US, I spoke at a time that was already the morning of the 16 June, Youth Day in SA. I used this fact and the reasons for the commemoration of 16 June 1976, to portray the picture of the progress or lack thereof of providing quality education for the learners that we serve in these areas and elsewhere.

It became abundantly clear to me that the delegates soon realized that there were stark and disturbing differences in the educational scene in South Africa and most places in the United States of America. In the session with only the principals and aspiring principals from St Louis, I spoke from my experience as school principal and encouraged my colleagues who I had sensed may be going through tough times (as principals tend to do), with their staff and parents. I aimed at motivating them to focus on the task at hand and to be patient with difficult staff members applying soft interpersonal skills.

At the graduation Ceremony of Saturday, 18 June, I was asked to address the large group of approx. 230 participants, facilitators and guests. Here I thanked the organizers for having had me interact with the group for the weekend. I pointed out to them the privilege that they have as principals of schools in Missouri. The access they have to academic training, them having being certified as principals before taking up their posts and the graduands having had the wonderful experience of participating in the Leadership Academy for the past year. Some of the senior members of the Academy have been involved in the LA for the past 20 years. To my mind this was an all round exceptionally productive experience for any one who had the mind to be

effective and efficient in the job of leading a school. I commended and also reminded them that all this development they've been exposed to should always be aimed at improved learner performance and not only personal improvement. If the latter is priority, then all the activities will have lost its significance.

I however come away from this experience enthused by the gains that the US have made on all fronts, believing that we also are able to, in whatever small but always significant way, make a difference as we tackle our own realities with a passion and resolve to turn things around for ourselves. I remain confident, as research and constant comments among scholars that it is the principal that should ultimately be responsible for the performance of the school.

I witnessed, as Dr Williams stated in his 2002 report, how the LA provided the space for school leaders with:

- Continued collaboration and support from other highly experienced and motivated administrators
- Problem sharing opportunities with others who are experiencing similar problems
- An opportunity to gain new experiences
- Exercises in using system thinking techniques.

I was also fortunate to be invited by Dr Lynn Beckwith to the programme he and Dr John Ingram presents for potential school administrators in the St Louis Public Schools in the Aspiring Principals Program. This invitation included a dinner with the cohort on Friday, 10 June and a morning session on Saturday, 11 June. As part of this programme experienced educational leaders work with the aspiring school principals to provide them with some sense of what is required to be a successful school leader. Topics included in this programme are more basic than those of the Principals' Academy.

These include building a shared vision, supervision, building leadership capacity, interviewing, resumé writing and communication skills. Throughout the programme that is held throughout the school year, great emphasis is placed on developing and understanding of the ISLLC standards. Expenses for the programme are covered by the Parsons Blewett Memorial Fund, directed by Mr Thomas Stenger.

The main impressions I take with me again concur with those of Dr Williams (2002) ie.

- The presenters are all highly qualified and can be considered to be experts in their respective fields. In the case of Drs Beckwith's programme, former and current highly successful school principal
- The emphasis is on growth and development and not on "fixing" people.
- Prominence is afforded to the development of the skills required to engage in professional conversation.
- The students are meant to learn more from each other, rather than from the presenter.
- The resources that are handed out are well planned and interactive, and require a lot of input from the workshop participants.
- The workshops are the collaborative effort of members of various institutions.
- Site visitations and attendance of conferences form an integral part of the workshops.
- Private funding is crucial to ensure the effective functioning of the workshops.
- Participants are expected to determine the content of the workshops.
- Attendance of workshops is not mandatory.

The University Of The Missouri- St Louis (UMSL)

UMSL is part of the Holmes Partnership that has been established to form a network of universities, schools, community agencies and national professional organizations working collaboratively to ensure professional development and school renewal. The overall aim focus of the Holmes Partnership is the improvement of teaching and learning for every pupil. From this overarching aims the following objectives are derived:

- To professionally prepare and develop public school educators;
- To renew public schools and teacher education programmes;
- To develop equity, diversity and cultural competence;
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- To conduct educational research to advance knowledge, improve the teaching and learning of students, inform the preparation and development of educators, and influence educational policy and practice;
- To contribute toward university-based faculty development;
- TO engage in policy analysis and development.

Appreciation and Gratitude

I hereby wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who had made my visit most successful and enjoyable. These American people made my stay a fabulous experience of a lifetime, one which I will never forget. A special word of thanks to my hosts Carl and Joan Bray and their extraordinarily well-mannered and kind son, Kolbe, who took me on as one of their own. They allowed me into their home, into their hearts and into their circle of friends. Carl spent a great deal of resources to ensure that I was comfortable and gave me access to technology without which I would not have learnt so much in such a short time.

The most fascinating thing about my Hoagland experience was that I was introduced to possibly the whole spectrum of the American life and culture by a family and a team (at TLC) who, in my opinion, were most aptly qualified to "show me the ropes". The Tempest in Forest Park, my first Baseball game (as spectator and avid learner-thanks to Ben Senturia), my first golf game (as player) and the variety of cuisine that I was treated to just cannot be adequately described in words. Carl's van was available for my use, and although many of his colleagues thought I was fortunate to survive while using it, I thought driving in it in the US made my time much more adventurous.

Mike Butler and his family took time to take me out to see a movie and have dinner. He also set up space on a website for me to make my photos available for my family to access them in SA- a superb ambassador for TLC and UMSL. Equally so was Brian who was so patient with me as he introduced me to the latest technology and made the laptop, video camera and still camera available to me for the three weeks. I appreciate him and Robert, Andre and Garon for taking good care of me and truly serving me with their skills and expertise.

Mike and Jane Pisoni who I had lunch with on the first Sunday in St Louis. I attended a church service with Jane in the morning and she took me to see the campus of Washington University in the afternoon. Thank you for kindness and warmth.

Marilyn, Amana, Lisa and Mary made me feel at home with the staff of TLC and just knew when I needed to restore my strength by offering either a cold soda or a warm cup of coffee. Thanks also to Amana who took me to the two schools and through the residential areas so I could see where and how the people live whose children attend those schools. Thanks to Marilyn for organizing the bag of gifts and momentos I brought home with me. You will all always remain special to me. Thanks again.

The whole TLC Team is a special unit that made me feel at home amongst them. Thanks for having me in your meetings and for the farewell cake in our country's colours. The TLC most definitely live by their vision and mission statement and deserve the award for teamwork that they received.

Dr Carole Murphy who gave me the right royal treatment in her beautiful home and who went to great lengths to show me around-even as far as Jefferson City and Illinois. I was indeed overwhelmed by her generosity. Thanks Dr Murphy for the gifts and

introductions to so many valuable and influential contacts. The lunch with the Rotarians was a huge highlight. Thanks for taking me shopping both in St Charles and at the Lake of the Ozarks. Will I ever forget the "small" ice-cream cone in Jefferson City and lunch in Illinois together with the ride on the ferry. I enjoyed the church service with you and the functions we attended together.

Most of all Dr Murphy kept my awareness alive as to the enormity of the task that now lies ahead. I am greatly indebted to Prof Herman, Dr Murphy, Dr Hoagland and Dr Miller for affording me the opportunity to visit the US and experience first hand how the Leadership Academy works and be able to learn from their valuable experiences.

Osman, my dear friend who I only got to know for a short while in Cape Town in April was like an older brother to me- one who advised and guided me and cared for me watching so that I do not make mistakes that could be avoided. I am deeply appreciative of your kindness, your time, your patience and your home. I sincerely appreciate you. I wish you well in all your future endeavours.

Dr Lynn Beckwith and Dr John Ingram for the interviews, the invitation to the dinner and workshop as well as the advice and commitment to stay with us as our Academy develops. Thank you also Dr Beckwith for the lunch. Dr Tom Hensley for the interview and advice. I will be staying in touch for further guidance. A big thank you to Dr Doug Miller, Gary Manford and their competent staff. I am deeply impressed by the good

work that you are doing and your offers of continued assistance as we develop our own project. A special thank you to Dr Miller for inviting me to the programme at the Lake. I am deeply indebted to you and I wish you well as you continue striving for excellence in your schools.

Dr Beverly Nance invited me to a most informative workshop on Systems Thinking she presented at the St Louis University and then we had lunch together. Dr Nance is a special person who cares about our people, especially our ability to do much for our schools in South Africa and I appreciate her for that. Thank you Dr Nance.

Dr John Henske, Dr Paulette Isaac-Savage and Dr Gwendolyn Turner reserved special time in their busy schedules to grant me an interview and later have dinner with me. I was given an opportunity to consider other perspectives for our Academy- that of Life-Long learning for our principals. I appreciate their contributions.

Dr Thomas Stenger was a source of great inspiration for my work. I appreciate his wisdom and general sensitivity for the work of school principals, the situation in our schools and education for the disadvantaged communities that we serve. A big thank you to Mr Stenger for his help and guidance.

Dr Dennis Dorsey and Dr Wayne Walker shared their wide experience in the RPDC's with me and advised me about the activities and resources that are available to educators and principals through this facility. I am grateful for their kind assistance. Thank you.

Our Leadership Academy- the Way Forward

As far as the establishment of our Leadership Academy, we will soon be launching it and following the example that Missouri has set for us.

I agree with Dr Williams in his 2002 report, that there are remarkable similarities between the situation in the Western Cape and that in Missouri, in spite of some obvious differences. The main challenges facing educational leaders in Missouri and the Western Cape are remarkably similar. There is much that our schools and school principals can learn following my Missouri experience.

Although our Steering Committee's process of consulting as widely as possible has generated an immense amount of interest and goodwill at home, the time for action has indeed come as we already agree. I have purposed in my heart that the next visit in the TELP programme, either way will be undertaken from or to a Leadership Academy in Cape Town that has changed its status from proposed to existing.

Finally, my sincerest appreciation to Dr Charles Schmitz and Dr Joel Glassman who by virtue of their influential positions at UMSL have been sensitive and wise to respond positively to help us to convert our Prof Herman's 2000 dream of good institutions, policy and practice for our schools into reality. Thank you colleagues. Your participation and contribution has been the source of inspiration that has moved us forward over the years. Now this idea's time has come. You will soon see how it comes together for South Africa's children. Their incalculable gain will be your reward.