

**REPORT ON UM-UWC EXCHANGE PROGRAMME VISIT TO KANSAS CITY IN
JUNE-JULY 2005**

Submitted by CWJ Africa

- 1. What was the objective of your visit?**
The objective was to learn about the latest techniques in immunology which may be applicable to my area of research.
- 2. If your objective was fulfilled, to what do you contribute your success?**
The opportunity provided by Dr McArthur and hard work on my part.
- 3. If your objective was not fulfilled, what was the reason?**
N/A
- 4. If you could have changed any aspect of your visit, what would it have been?**
I would have stayed for a longer period. It was stimulating to be learning so many new things and I was just getting into it when it was time to leave.
- 5. How could the planning and preparation for your visit have been improved by UWC?**
I submitted my travel details well in advance but there appeared to be some confusion as to who would process it with the result that I was left with the last minute rush that I had hoped to avoid. Also, as a result, I missed an important research meeting which I had arranged for my stopover in London and had to travel to Portugal to meet with Dr Tomas. This had serious financial implications for me.
- 6. What is your overall assessment of the value of the UM/UWC Exchange Program?**
I feel it is beneficial to both parties and feel that more academics should participate. It opens doors for collaboration and networking. I am extremely grateful that I was selected to participate.
- 7. If you could change any aspect of the overall exchange program, what would you change?**
This time round, everything was fine, so I see no need to change anything. My accommodation and subsistence were all pre-arranged and everything ran smoothly.
- 8. Did you encounter any special problems during your visit?**
No.
- 9. How would your visit change, improve or strengthen programs at UWC?**
It has been many years since I was involved in immunology and because of one of my research projects was moving in that direction, I felt the need to catch up on the latest in the field so that I could adequately supervise my students. This visit has helped to fill the gaps in my knowledge which have been formed by the fast pace with which immunology has evolved. I have on my return discussed the possibility of research collaboration with Dr Pool who is involved in

immunology research and we have agreed to strengthen our research programme by joint supervision of postgraduate students . Most of the students who apply for postgraduate study in the Department of Medical Biosciences want to work with Dr Pool and me but due to lack of funds, I have had to turn students away. With a slight change of focus and joint supervision, we can overcome this until such time as I am able to generate independent research funding again.

10. Given the opportunity to participate in the exchange again, would you do so?

I would welcome an opportunity to do so. Dr McArthur and I have discussed the possibility of many future collaborative projects.

11. What, if anything about your exchange experience surprised you?

How much I enjoyed being on my own. Even though I knew company would be just a phone call away, I enjoyed the freedom to be on my own and work flat-out without having to fit into any set appointments or commitments outside of what I had set out to do.

12. What did you like most about the program?

(i) The opportunity to focus on research only and determine my own pace and time-frames. (ii) The convenience of staying so close to where I worked. It allowed me to work whenever I wanted without having to consider whether or not it would be safe for me to travel home at a particular time. I achieved so much.

12. What other observations would you like to make about the program?

See question 6.

13. How is the knowledge and experience gained on this exchange program going to influence your future work related endeavors.

See question 9. In addition, I managed to write the first draft of three papers while I was there, which I hope will finally be accepted for publication . My research area attracts students but I am currently unable to accept more than two students because of lack of funding. The research publications will strengthen my applications for research grants. Collaboration with Dr McArthur will assist in broadening the scope of research. Because of heavy teaching commitments in the past few years, I neglected my research and lost my NRF rating. Now that my research is starting to pick up again, I hope to regain my rating with NRF and obtain funding.

14. What specifically will these future endeavors entail?

Building of a research team dedicated to women's health and well-being. It would be beneficial to spread the research thrust across faculties and make it more holistic.

15. Should the exchange program be continued? If so why?

Yes, for the reasons listed above.

