Visit Report
University of the Western Cape
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Introduction

The University of Missouri (UM) has partnered with the University of the Western Cape (UWC) since 1986. The purpose of the UM/UWC linkage is to advance mutual understanding between the institutions’ faculties and to demonstrate the ability of the two institutions to cooperate in teaching, research, and service. (http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/departments/aa/southafrica/history.shtml)

As Acting Director of the University of Missouri South African Education Program (UMSAEP), I traveled to UWC in October 2007. My itinerary included visits with the rector, vice rectors, select deans, directors, and faculty members. This visit served two primary purposes: (1) interviews with applicants for the 2008 UMSAEP Linkage Awards; and (2) discussion with key leaders at the UWC regarding future programs and initiatives for the UM/UWC partnership. The agenda was extensive and well executed under the direction of Professor Jan Persens, Director of International Relations, and his assistant, Ms. Debra Lamson.

The meetings were productive and included dialogues regarding current initiatives supported by the UM/UWC partnership as well as opportunities for the future direction of the program. This report will focus primarily on these exchanges. Specific details related to UWC applicants for the 2008 award cycle are purposely withheld for discussion in closed UMSAEP committee meetings.

2008 Linkage Proposal Applicants: UWC

During my visit, I met with Professors Collins, Frantz, Khotseng, Kock, Makaudze, Matshaya, and Struthers. Overall, the meetings provided additional detail regarding the substance, anticipated outcomes, and scope of the proposals authored by the respective applicants. I addressed any missing components of the applicants as necessary and requested that the information be forwarded to the UM and UWC committees prior to the final meeting with Professor Persens during his visit to the University of Missouri. This year, seven of the eight applications lacked supporting documentation from deans or department heads. Additionally, there were a few applications missing requested budget information. Professor Persens and I noted ways to improve communication with applicants toward a complete proposal at time of submission.

UM / UWC Partnership: A Look into the Future

In several venues, the conversation regarding the future of the UM/ UWC partnership echoed similar themes. In separate meetings, the UWC Senate International Relations Committee, Professor Stan Ridge, Vice-Rector, and Professor Jan Persens discussed several ideas that can be categorized under three themes: academic staff development (faculty development); research and scholarship; and study abroad. Additionally, the idea of focusing on one or two niche areas in which we can develop deeper levels of engagement around specific scholarship was raised for consideration.
Academic Staff Development: The focus for academic staff (faculty) development was at two levels: faculty members who serve as lecturer but have not yet completed their doctoral degree and new faculty members (holding doctoral degrees). I discussed several initiatives that we have on our campuses, including, but not limited to the New Faculty Teaching Scholars Program, Preparing Future Faculty; and programs offered in our teaching and learning centers, which have various names and programs on each campus.

Research and Scholarship: The University of the Western Cape has a strong interest in increasing the research and scholarship generated from the campus. In doing so, there are several areas in which the partnership with the University of Missouri could work toward this goal. Through our partnership, UWC would like to learn from and develop capacity for managing research, securing external funding, communication of grant opportunities and request for proposals, as well as identifying areas for joint application and collaboration.

Study Abroad: The campus constituents with whom I discussed the proposed new study abroad program were enthusiastic about the opportunity. There was pertinent discussion on identifying faculty (academic staff) leads, the appropriate course for instruction, and housing needs. One of the opportunities for the future includes increased participation for students to engage across the two institutions. I also received requests for longer exchanges; more student participation; and innovative ideas for increased interaction among our students, particularly for programs focused on undergraduate students.

Henry Mitchell Scholar
During my visit, I met Daniel Pliske, the Henry Mitchell scholar from UM-Kansas City. Daniel is an impressive student. He is doing well in his studies and has embraced this study abroad experience as an opportunity to become immersed in South African culture on all levels. He serves as a strong ambassador for the University of Missouri and the Henry Mitchell Scholarship program.

Nursing LDP: Taking it to the Next Level
The Nursing Leadership Development Program (LDP) continues to show its success in the UWC nursing community. From this collaboration, new programs have been created and other achievements which have helped progress the nursing department in fulfilling its mission and objectives are underway. It was recommended that new sources of external funding be pursued and the success of the Nursing LDP be shared with funding agencies. One way to do this is to form a task force to tell the nursing story. Recommended participants included: Professors Lora Lacey-Haun (UMKC), Thad Wilson (UMKC), Kay Libbus (UMC), Donna Taliaferro (UMSL), Cheryl Nikodem (UWC), and Elma Kortenbout (UWC).

Conclusion
My visit to the University of the Western Cape was a productive trip and accomplished its purposes. The University of Missouri and the University of the Western Cape, together as partners, continue to set an example of successful international partnership that seeks to advance knowledge and improve the lives of those in our communities.