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**A REPORT ON A MONTH'S VISIT TO MISSOURI UNIVERSITY, COLUMBIA  
CAMPUS, FROM NOVEMBER 24 TO DECEMBER 14, 2007 AS A  
PARTICIPANT IN THE UM/UWC ACADEMIC EXCHANGE PROGRAMME**

**The Objective of the visit**

The main objective of my visit to the Department of Health Care Management and Informatics(HMI) was primarily to assist me in my current efforts to develop a proposal to run a B Comm.(Hons), MComm and PhD program in Health Care Management at The University of Western Cape. The visit was aimed at guiding me during the conceptualization and design stages of the program. The key objectives of my visit were to:

1. Gain insight into the structure, administration and financing of the Department
2. Glean information on the structure and content of the graduate programs
3. Enhance my research expertise in the field of Health Management by participating in UM's research program as well as finding collaborators for joint research projects.
4. To receive training in the design and delivery of Health Management Programs.

**Extent to which my objectives were fulfilled and why I did not fully achieve my objectives**

My objectives for this exploratory visit were achieved! I had the full support of Faculty and administrative staff and had full access to all information that I required. Academics were extremely supportive of my project and provided me with course materials etc. I also had the opportunity to sit in on lectures. Most importantly, I was privileged to observe the accreditation process at HMI which gave me great insight into the competency based approach to health management education. The management at HMI also suggested that they were not averse to some sort of collaboration with me in setting up the program.

I have also engaged with two academics on the possibility of doing research together. The project with Prof Cheryl Rathert has already begun. It is aimed at developing a patient satisfaction survey tool for South Africa. I will be in contact with Prof Naresh

Khathri soon to flesh out a proposal that we will jointly develop to study leadership styles in South African hospitals and its impact on clinical outcomes.

Finally, I also had the opportunity to meet several stakeholders in both Columbia and Kansas City all of whom were supportive of my efforts to start a program in health management at UWC.

### **Aspects of my visit I would have wished changed**

Apart from limited time and the inclement weather, I would change nothing!

### **Area of improvement within the UWC structures**

I experienced no problems on either end as far as the logistics of my trip are concerned. Administrative staff on both ends were extremely efficient and effective in executing their duties.

### **An overall assessment of the value of UM/UWC Exchange Programme**

The exchange program is extremely valuable and a great opportunity for developing academics to be exposed to institutions of the caliber of UM. The willingness of the UM/UWC Exchange Program participants to share knowledge and information is the strength of the program. In my case, apart from obtaining a wealth of information and insight into developing a health management program, the UMSAEP can make it possible for HMI faculty to play an active role in the design and delivery of the program. It is certainly my aim to leverage the UMSAEP to encourage HMI faculty to visit and play a key role in my program.

### **An Aspect of the overall exchange programme that needs improvement**

It is very difficult for me to pin point an area for improvement as my experience was 'flawless'. From the time I expressed an interest in the program to my return home, I encountered no problems. Support on both ends was phenomenal.

### **Problems encountered during my visit**

None

### **How my visit will improve programmes at UWC**

The visit to UM will always be considered as the facilitator of my initiatives to develop a health management program. I think the HMI influence will be noticeable in the design and delivery of the program. I expect to have completed a draft proposal by June 2008 which will then be forwarded on to HMI for comments and discussion as to their role in the program. I foresee strong collaboration with potential for a joint UM/UWC degree program.

**Question on whether I would still want to participate in the exchange programme if given the opportunity**

I certainly look forward to my future participation and the building of a tangible relationship with HMI.

**An aspect of my exchange experience that surprised me**

The support and co-operation of my hosts Dr Deborah Noble and Prof Grant Savage were exceptional. I was a bit uncertain as to how I would be received but I was made to feel at home at HMI. I also had the opportunity to also socialize with many of the academics and their families which made the visit really special.

**What I like most about the programme**

The opportunity to meet academics in my field – very few in SA

**How the knowledge and experience gained will influence my future work related endeavours**

The knowledge and experience gained will be crucial as I embark on designing a degree program in health management. Most of the information that was required for my proposal was obtained from UM, thanks to the co-operation of all at HMI.

I am also busy with collaborative research with two academics and I hope that this will increase in time.

**What the future endeavours specifically entail**

- Development of a proposal for the commencement of a health services leadership program at the School of Business and Finance – in collaboration with HMI at UM
- Research project on the development of a patient satisfaction survey tool for south Africa with Prof Cheryl Rathert.
- Research project on the relationship between leadership style and clinical outcomes with Prof Naresh Khathri

**Question on whether the exchange programme should be continued**

The exchange program should be definitely continued so long as there are tangible results. The success of the program can only be measured if the objectives of participants

have been met. Participants should therefore be encouraged to state the objectives and the outcomes and a time frame within which they hope to achieve this.

**Other observation relating to the exchange program**

The program should be actively marketed at UM. Most UM academics that I communicated with were unaware of the strong linkage between UM and UWC. It would be great to have more UM academics visit UWC - something that I will encourage in the health management program at UWC.