Distance Learning Expands Collaborations Between UM and University of the Western Cape

Since 1986, the University of Missouri System and each of its four campuses have had a very productive relationship with the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Nonetheless, as good as our partnership has been, there is still considerable room for growth. At the 20th year celebration of the relationship between UM and UWC in 2006, representatives from both schools began discussing ways to expand the collaborative activities between our two universities. Part of that conversation focused on the extent to which technology could aid our collaborative efforts. Given the importance that each institution places on internationalizing its school, it is not surprising that there are administrators and faculty at both UM and UWC who see considerable value in using distance learning and eLearning as vehicles for promoting internationalization. Indeed, many agree that distance learning provides us a cost effective vehicle to offer students at both schools a broader
perspective by enabling them to interact with and learn from students and faculty at the other institution.

This past summer UMSAEP Director Rodney Uphoff had a number of discussions with UWC Rector Brian O’Connell and other UWC administrators, deans and faculty members who expressed a strong interest in seeing us expand our respective teaching and research missions by means of distance learning. Many at UWC believe that distance learning not only will enable us to increase and improve our collaborations, but also provide us a means to expand the reach of the UM/UWC partnership to other parts of Africa. Indeed, later in this newsletter you can read about the work of Dr. Carole McArthur of UMKC and Professor Neil Anderson of Missouri S&T. Both are working with colleagues at UWC and other African schools on exciting projects likely to significantly impact the lives of many people in Africa.

Uphoff and UWC Professor Jan Persens participated in a series of video conferences this summer linking UWC faculty and administrators with faculty and administrators from each of the four Missouri campuses. All of the participants were surprised at the ease and value of video conferencing. Several professors also noted the potential that video conferencing holds for improving their research collaborations. MU Professors Colleen Heflin and Margie Sable each lectured to a UWC class via video conferencing and found the experience to be a stimulating one. Both lectures also were very well received by UWC students.

Video conferencing is, of course, only one of a number of distance learning or eLearning tools that can be used to improve the educational experiences of our students. We could effectively use video conferencing as follows:

- A UM or UWC professor uses a professor from the other school to give a video conference lecture to his/her own students.
- A UM or UWC professor adds a video conference class or two including a professor and/or students from the other school, thereby adding an international component to an existing course.
- A UM or UWC professor teaches an existing course for the other school via video conferencing. The professor is essentially like an adjunct professor and is paid a stipend by the host school. Alternatively, a UM or UWC department might agree to assign one of its professors to teach a course for the other school in exchange for the other school having one of its professors teach a course for that department. Using this approach, the professor would not receive any additional stipend, but perhaps be relieved of some other teaching assignment.

- A UM or UWC professor teaches an existing course at his or her home school, but allows a limited number of students from the other school to enroll. Under this approach, students would enroll at their own school and pay tuition to that school. This requires, of course, that the course also be approved for credit at the other school (this may be a harder hurdle for UWC than for UM, given the structure of their school).
- Two or more professors from different schools jointly teach students from both schools. The course must be approved at each school. It may be easiest to select a course that is already approved and modify it (name changed/length of course, etc.) so that the course works for both schools. Students then enroll for credit at their own school (amount of credit and grading done by each professor of students at that school) and pay tuition to the home school.

Although most of our video conferences last summer were very successful, we admittedly had some problems develop that highlight the importance of a pre-test and show that firewall issues can crop up if we change rooms, especially at the last minute. In fact, we learned that even changing locations within a building – say at Jesse Hall – requires reconfiguring the IP address. Technology is, of course, improving rapidly and the sound and audio quality of our video conferences with UWC are even better now than they were this summer. Moreover, UWC anticipates a tenfold improvement in their bandwidth by March 2010. Undoubtedly, as UWC’s bandwidth improves and we gain experience with video conferencing, the
technological problems can be overcome. The immediate challenges we face are:

1) Getting more faculty and departments at each school connected with their counterparts at the other school;
2) Making it easier for faculty members at either school to locate a readily available site to conduct a video conference;
3) Making more mobile units readily accessible so that faculty members can use video conferencing to have faculty members and/or students from the other school participate in a class at the other;
4) Navigating the time difference between Missouri and Cape Town (8 hours normally and 7 during daylight saving hours) which requires video conferences to be held between 7:30 am and 10:00 am in Missouri.

In the end, video conferencing and other forms of distance learning can help both UM and UWC internationalize our respective campuses, but only if there are deans and faculty at each school who are willing to be flexible and to work with their counterparts at the other school to take advantage of the potential that distance learning offers.

**UWC’S Dr. David Fisher Lauds Usefulness of Video Conferencing**

Prof. David Fisher is the chairperson of UWC's Dept. of Medical Biosciences. His primary objective in coming to MU on the UMSAEP faculty exchange was to continue his research collaboration with MU Prof. Doug Bowles. Specifically, their current project involves exploring "the effects of varying concentrations of extracts from two plants known for their affects on the male reproductive system, *typha capensis* and *carica papaya*, on cultured Sertoli cells, using microspectrofluorescence techniques to evaluate the trans-membrane fluxes of calcium in real time in response to the extract. Secondly, to investigate the effect of these extracts on the ionic fluxes across the Sertoli cell membrane, using the patch-clamp electrophysiological technique." In addition, Dr. Fisher was interested in knowing to what extent video conferencing would enable him as both an academic and a head of the department to be able carry out research at the University of Missouri and yet to functionally be able to respond to urgent academic, post-graduate and under-graduate student and administrative requirements.

In Dr. Fisher's view, his visit was an unqualified success. Using microspectrofluorescence, he and Dr. Bowles "were able to record a significant amount of new and publishable data." Using the electrophysiology technique, which Dr. Fisher describes as "one of the most difficult techniques in biological research in which to become proficient," he and Dr. Bowles made "a significant breakthrough with the cultured Sertoli cells." On previous visits when they had trypsinated the cells growing on the fibronectin-coated coverslips, patching was extremely difficult, which resulted on average in only retrieving data from one cell per week. On this visit, however, "the Sertoli cells were exceptionally easy to patch. In fact, every coverslip with Sertoli cells provided publishable data. I was so successful at this technique that at 18:00 hours, on the day before departing for Cape Town, I was still busy patching Sertoli cells. The significance of this success is enormous, as experienced “patches” often only obtain 1 or 2 good "patches" per week." Dr. Fisher concluded that, "I was, and still am, so enthused by this success that I am actively pursuing setting up a patch clamp system at the Department of Medical Biosciences, UWC."

Finally, Dr Fisher learned a great deal about the value of video conferencing in enabling him to do his research while successfully meeting his responsibilities back at UWC. In his words,

"Trans-Atlantic Academic Functionality: When I last visited MU (2005), the only modes of communication were using the prohibitively expensive telephone and/or email. As there is a seven hour difference in time between MU and UWC emails, responses normally had a 24 hour lag time. Nothing urgent could be addressed or immediately be resolved. Any student interaction had to wait on the return of the academic.

This scenario had dramatically changed during my last visit (2009) with the advent
of real time video conference (VC) facilities at both UM and UWC. Of the number of such facilities at UM I was lucky to have a dedicated video conference room which was situated within the Vet School, just meters from the lab where I worked. Because of the time difference most of my sessions were scheduled early in the morning (6am which is equivalent to 1pm South African time). This made the use of the VC facility available throughout the duration of my stay and, furthermore, I was given a key to access the facility whenever the need arose. In this regard, I would like to thank the kind administrative (Karol Dinwiddie) and the IT staff at the Vet School for always assisting me.

The VC-facility allowed me to consult with my research team, my post graduate students, as well as with a group of undergraduate students who completed a research project with me. It was especially convenient for the undergraduate students who at the time that I left for UM had just completed collecting the data for their project and were particularly concerned regarding my proposed research visit to UM. However, I arranged several video-conferencing sessions with them during which we were able to discuss different issues regarding their draft research projects and their presentation thereof, both of which were crucial to their completion of the research module. The students found this mode of communication both exciting and novel, and were genuinely in awe of the cutting edge technology which was able to connect two sets of individuals across approximately 9000km and separated by the vast Atlantic Ocean, and that in real time.

The draft documents, for which I was responsible to provide editing and comment, were emailed to me. I would print these in Doug’s lab and edited them using my usual method (comments in pen). The edited version was then scanned and emailed to my students as a PDF document using the automated photocopy system at the Vet School.

The third year students and my honours student all presented their final oral presentations on their research projects via the video conference facility at UWC. I would also like to thank Graham Julies for always assisting and sorting out connection problems regarding the VC link, from UWC’s side.

The VC facility enormously facilitates exchange visits between UWC and UM, especially for busy academics who have student commitments during the time they plan to go on a scheduled research visit. In other words, all the facilities exist to fully carry out the academic duties of any exchange staff member while visiting UM or vice versa.

I would like to thank Professor Rod Uphoff for his insistence on using the video conference system to meet with my collaborator, Doug Bowles, before I embarked on this trip. Before this, I was not aware of the ease at which the video conference equipment works and also the feasibility of using it for consultations with my students.

As my hotel offered free broadband internet access for the duration of my visit, I utilized Skype for all my face to face consultations with the Dean of our faculty, with my PA and administrative staff on a daily basis, and with my wife and family at home in Cape Town. Thus, any emergency issues relating to the faculty and to the running of the department could be dealt with promptly.”

Dr Fisher ended his report with these observations.

"I wish to reiterate my previous sentiments: The exchange of ideas, both culturally and academically, are central to the ethos of individuals and institutions
who want to be on the cutting edge of research, discovery and vision. The exchange program between the two institutions facilitates this process and attempts to prevent a detrimental introverted vision from developing. Each of my visits to UM has made life richer and scientifically more endowed. Once again I would like to echo my previous sentiments: visiting the world class research infrastructure at UM Biomedical Sciences Department could be likened to a research oasis. Here the researcher can obtain a focus that is not currently possible at UWC, where research funding is scarce and continuity of time required for focused research is interrupted by large lecture loads.”

To read more about Dr. Fisher’s visit, please visit:

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**Study abroad trip to South Africa**

*by Dr. Marjorie Sable*

During summer 2009, 11 graduate students traveled to Cape Town, South Africa, to participate in a two-week study abroad program in collaboration with the School of Social Work at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The trip was led by Dr. Marjorie Sable, director of MU School of Social Work, and Dr. Lois Pierce, director of the UM-St. Louis School of Social Work. Both have extensive experience in conducting research, teaching and working with colleagues at the University of the Western Cape. Dr. Marcel Londt, UWC School of Social Work faculty member, coordinated the visit from the South African side.

Six of the students were from Mizzou (five from the MSW program and one from the MPH program). The other five students were MSW students from Washington University in St. Louis (2), Virginia Commonwealth University (2), and University of California at Berkeley (1).

Students spent the first week visiting social services agencies, a township school, a youth prison program at Pollsmoor Prison and historical sites (e.g., Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela and other political activists were imprisoned by the Apartheid government). The group also spent a day in Wellington at Hugenot College, where Dr. Cudore Snell, Dean of the Howard University School of Social Work and native of Wellington, and his colleagues spoke about an NIH-funded research study on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in the Western Cape. FAS is a problem in the wine-country area because of a former practice known as the “dop” system, where farm workers were paid, in part, with alcohol—which has led to high rates of alcoholism and FAS.

The weekend between our site visits and classroom study was spent touring the area. Seven of the students climbed up (and down) Table Mountain, and the group spent a day visiting the Cape Point and Cape of Good Hope areas. Despite being winter in the southern hemisphere, the weather was unseasonably warm and sunny!

The second week was spent taking classes at the UWC School of Social Work. UWC students were enrolled in a one-week intensive class and chose three of the following modules: South African Families and Households, Child Protection, Poverty and Children’s Rights.

The U.S. students also participated in the class lectures and assignments, but they all agreed that the best part about the week was interacting with South African Social Work students and finding out how much they have in common. During tea-time (10 a.m. daily), many of the students and Social Work faculty shared stories that reflected the discrimination that they (or their parents) faced growing up.
The University of the Western Cape was established during Apartheid as a “colored” (e.g., mixed race) institution of higher learning. It was one of the centers of political activity against the Apartheid government. In 1986, the University of Missouri established a formal partnership with the University of the Western Cape for faculty exchanges, and, more recently, student exchanges. This summer’s study abroad is an outgrowth of that partnership.

The trip was deemed a great success, and Sable and Pierce are hoping to lead future study abroad trips to UWC.

“I went on this trip not knowing what to expect and not really knowing the people I was traveling with, but I left with great memories and many new friends (in the U.S. and South Africa)! In just three short weeks and 60+ hours of traveling, it is amazing how much you can learn about your travel mates and the memories that you can create! I honestly do not think I have ever laughed so much in my life.... I highly recommend traveling abroad and experiencing another culture first hand—just remember to go with the flow and take it one day at a time!”

—Alicia Firman, MSW student

Study abroad students at the District Six Museum with tour guide, Noor.

Face-painting participants at the Africa Cafe included Mizzou students Lauren Grana, Alicia Firman, Faith Wemhoff, Sarah Longlett and Tina Rowe. (Photos by Margie Sable)
Camp’s Bay is much like Laguna Beach, Calif., according to one study-abroad student (except that the water was very cold that day). (Photo by Elaine Lawless)

A typical township. There is a stark contrast between affluent communities (like Camp’s Bay, left) and the townships. (Photo by Alicia Firman)

Internet Resources on South Africa
- African Internet Connectivity: http://www3.sn.apc.org/africa
- The South Africa Initiative Office (U. of Michigan): http://www.umich.edu/~saioum
- Independent Online News: http://www.iol.co.za/
- UMSAEP: http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/departments/aa/southafrica
- The University of the Western Cape: http://www.uwc.ac.za

2009 Exchanges

In 2009, as in previous years, UM and UWC faculty members participated in a number of productive exchanges. The following two examples highlight the diverse activities that mark both the UM/UWC linkage exchanges and the South African Partnership awards:

**Dr. Lorna Holtman** directs the Post-Graduate Enrollment and Throughput Rate Project (PET) at UWC. This project was designed to increase the number of postgraduate students at UWC, and to provide them the support and mentoring needed to be successful. Dr. Holtman traveled to UMSL and to MU to explore best practices at both schools and to share what UWC has learned since 2001 when PET was started. Additionally, because UWC does not currently have a graduate school structure, Dr. Holtman wanted to examine how MU and UMSL operate their graduate schools to assist her efforts to design a graduate school at UWC.

Dr. Holtman felt that her visit was very successful and attributed much of the success of her visit to good planning. She had two video conferences before her trip: one with Pat Boyer of UMSL and the other with Pam Benoit and Sheryl Tucker of MU. The video conferences enabled Dr. Holtman to more clearly hone her objectives for the visit and help her hosts identify the key people that Dr. Holtman needed to see to provide her a broad
overview of the operation and structure of both graduate schools. Dr Holtman reported that her trip gave her a host of ideas for improving the operation of her PET project and for designing the new graduate school at UWC. Further, Dr. Holtman has continued to work with her colleagues at MU and UMSL since her return to UWC.

For a look at Dr. Holtman’s report and the reports of other UM and UWC faculty members who traveled in 2009, go to http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/departments/aa/southafrica/pgmlinkage/.

Dr. Carole McArthur of the Department of Oral Biology at UMKC received a South Africa Partnership Program award for 2009. Dr. McArthur has been involved in a long term collaboration with Dr. Charlene Africa in UWC’s Department of Medical Biosciences. Supported by prior UMSAEP grants, Dr. McArthur and Dr. Africa have engaged in collaborative research on the mechanism of salivary gland disease. Salivary gland disease occurs in HIV and in autoimmune diseases. Their research has generated two joint publications.

Dr. McArthur’s 2009 visit enabled her to finalize additional research results and to expand her network of collaborators at UWC. Significantly, Dr. McArthur worked to connect MU researchers at UWC and those at Stellenbosch University with her research partners at UMKC and in Cameroon. Dr. McArthur has spent much of the past 14 years creating and directing a HIV/TB research facility in Cameroon. In Cameroon, she also collaborates with a large group of traditional healers.

One of the outcomes of Dr. McArthur’s trip this year was to link her UWC colleagues with her research facility in Cameroon. This partnership will provide UWC researchers access to an ideal environment to evaluate certain phytotherapies for fighting TB and a place to conduct clinical trials. Linking traditional healers in Cameroon and in South Africa offers additional opportunities for research collaborations. Dr. McArthur’s collaborative network holds great promise for conducting important research on TB and HIV-AIDS. For a more detailed look at Dr. McArthur’s trip and others who received SA partnership awards, go to: http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/departments/aa/southafrica/pgmpartnerships/.

UMSAEP Project Updates

One of the most impressive features of the UM/UWC linkage exchanges and the South African Partnership Program awards has been the extent to which UMSAEP funding for a research project has been instrumental in enabling UM and UWC faculty to obtain significant outside funding. For example, in 2008, Dr. Rob Paul, Director of Behavioral Neuroscience in the Department of Psychology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, received a SA Partnership award to conduct a pilot study in South Africa on the impact of a specific protein defect in a genetic form of HIV (clade C HIV). Clade C HIV is the most common form of HIV worldwide, but because it is not present in North America, relatively little is known about the biological and functional aspects of this form of HIV.

Dr. Paul and his collaborators at the University of Stellenbosch Medical School and the University of Cape Town were able to use UMSAEP funding to extend work on Clade C HIV that Dr. Paul began in India to South Africa. Since receiving that funding, Dr. Paul established a team of investigators in Cape Town who collected neuropsychological and neuroimaging data on a cohort of patients infected with Clade C HIV as well as from a control group. His team has already published two papers based on this work and a third paper has been submitted for peer review. Based on the results of this South African pilot study, Dr. Paul’s team received a five year NIH RO1 to continue their investigation. The RO1 is a collaborative effort involving five universities with UMSL serving as the home site. The total budget for this project is approximately $3 million. To read more about this project, see: http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/departments/aa/southafrica/pgmpartnerships/.
In addition, Neil Anderson, Professor of Applied Geophysics and Geological Engineering at Missouri University of Science and Technology, has worked with his colleagues at UWC on various water resource projects over the past 13 years. In 2009, Professor Anderson worked with an interdisciplinary team including Lewis Jonker (UWC), Dominic Mazvimavi (UMC), Professor Jimmy Adegoke (UMKC), Professor Jejung Lee (UMKC), Ronaldo Luna (Missouri S&T), Chris Fulcher (MU), Ikbal Chaudbury (Lincoln University), Aphrodis Karangwa (National University of Rwanda), and Abrahim Goni (University of Maiduguri -Nigeria), among others on a proposal to build capacity and academic programs involving water resource management at partner Africa universities. Many of the members of this team had collaborated on projects in Africa before with one or more of the other team members, but this project sparked new relationships and other collaborative possibilities. Although this team ultimately did not receive the USAID planning grant that they were seeking, Profs. Anderson and Lee, along with MU’s Jack Jones and UWC’s Yongxin Xu collaborated on another water resource assessment proposal in Southern Sudan. This proposal was a success and resulted in multi-million dollar funding of their project by the World Bank. Given the important role that water plays in development throughout the African continent, this project provides these UM and UWC scientists an opportunity to make an incredible difference in Southern Sudan. Given that country’s significant needs, it is anticipated that more opportunities will arise for other UM researchers and teachers as Southern Sudan attempts to rebuild its infrastructure.

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**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Linkage Awards**

The UMSAEP Committee met with Professor Jan Persens, UWC Director of International Relations, on September 14, 2009 in Columbia to select participants for 2010. The committee authorized awards to four UWC faculty members and four UM faculty members.

**UWC faculty receiving UMSAEP awards (UM hosts in parentheses)**

- Kelvin Mwaba, Ph.D. and Nicolette Roman, Ph.D. (Kevin D. Everett, Ph.D., MU)
- Henry Okola Nyongesam Ph.D. (Sanjay K. Madria, Ph.D., Missouri S&T)
- Firdouza Waggie (Richard Oliver, Ph.D., MU)

**UM faculty receiving UMSEP awards (UWC hosts in parentheses):**

- Thomas G. Johnson, Ph.D., Division of Applied Social Sciences (Prof Andries du Toit)
- William Lamberson, Ph.D., Animal Science (Dr. David Fisher)
- Patricia Boyer, Ph.D., Educational Leadership (Dr. Lorna Holtman)
- Matthew J. Taylor, Ph.D., Department of Psychology (Dr. Kelvin Mwaba)

**2010 South African Partnerships Program**

- Enid Schatz, Ph.D. (MU, Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science)/ Dr. Sebastiana Kalula (UWC) – Meet with collaborators and visit research sites on continuing project to collect data regarding the lives of older South Africans. The goal is to secure NIH funding to study the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa on older citizens.

**Comparative Law at UWC**

For the sixth year, the University of Missouri School of Law joined with the law faculty at UWC to offer a comparative law program for American and UWC law students.
The program was held at UWC from June 4-July 13, 2009. MU Professor Rodney Uphoff and UWC Professor Pierre de Vos directed the program, which was attended by 28 American students and 20 UWC students.

The students took comparative courses in constitutional law, criminal justice administration and alternative dispute resolution. In addition to Professors Uphoff and de Vos, MU Dean Larry Dessem and UWC Professors Craig Bosch and Lovell Fernandez taught in the program.

**UWC Law Fellowship**

In August 2009, UWC students Hakim Salum, Chipili Salati and Martine Pieterkosky enrolled in MU School of Law’s Dispute Resolution LLM Program.

The three UWC students are attending MU as recipients of fellowships supported by gifts to MU School of Law from Fred White, Geoffrey Oelsner and Robert Lande.

Three other UWC students have been awarded similar fellowships to study at MU starting in August 2010.

**UM and UWC Visitors**

2009 UM visitors to South Africa include the following: Dr. Marian Minor, Dr. Carl Hoagland, Professor Rodney Uphoff, Dr. Delwyn Catley, Dr. Kathy Goggin, Dr. Carole McArthur, Dr. Neil Anderson, Dr. Enid Schatz, Dr. Thomas Johnson, Dr. Evan Prost, Dr. Bill Folk, Dr. Marjorie Sable, Dr. Lois Pierce, Dr. Charles Sampson, Dr. Guy Adams

2009 UWC visitors to Missouri include: Professor Jan Persens, Manie Regal, Dr. David Fisher, Shafiek Dinie, Thandi Puoane, Lungiswa Tsolekile, Dr. Lorna Holtman, Dr. Quinton Johnson

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**UM/UWC Faculty Exchange Summary Update:**

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Mitchell Scholarship Application Deadlines Announced

Joel Downer of UMSL and Inge Voigt of UWC were selected as Henry Mitchell Scholars this past year. Joel attended UWC during the spring and summer of 2009. Inge attended MU in the fall of 2009.

The UM deadline for applications for the Mitchell Scholarship for study at UWC for the fall 2010 semester is March 1, 2010. Classes start at UWC for the fall semester on July 12, 2010.

The application deadline for the winter 2011 semester is September 15, 2010.

An application form is available for downloading at http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/departments/aa/southafrica/request.shtml#3. A completed application should be sent to the international office on your campus.

Pictured above are: MU Professor Rod Uphoff hosts UWC Professor Jan Persens, UWC law students Hakim Salum, Chipili Salati and Martine Pieterkosky, and Fred White, one of the donors whose gift brought the UWC students to MU School of Law.