

UM-UWC Linkage Program
Final Report for Patricia G. Boyer

Project Goals:

The goal of my visit to The University of the Western Cape (UWC) in South Africa was to assist in the development of the Graduate School by working with postgraduate students and supervisors to establish “best practices” for Postgraduate Enrolment and Throughput Programme (PET) participants. More specifically, the purpose was to mentor and support students, and to collaborate, mentor and support supervisors affiliated with the PET Program. Importantly, a long term goal of my visit to UWC is to maintain a collaborative relationship with the PET Program Director, Dr. Holtman and her colleagues to provide ongoing support to the PET Program.

Project Objectives:

Prior to my visit to UWC, my anticipated contributions to the PET Project were to:

- Conduct workshops with faculty on how to prepare students for postgraduate work based on my years of experience in working with graduate students;
- Conduct workshops with faculty on aspects of faculty development such as the importance of grant writing based on my research;
- Provide one-on-one mentoring, support, guidance and advice to students working on Master’s level thesis or doctoral dissertation;
- Provide one-on-one mentoring and advice to faculty working on research projects; and
- Collaborate with faculty on various research projects.

Impact of the Visit:

Dates of my visit were 1 May 2010 to 31 May 2010. Specific weekly activities were as follows:

Week One Activities-

My initial time was spent acquiring a better understanding the higher education system in South Africa and comparing it to the United States’ system of higher education. This was accomplished by discussing information with Dr. Holtman, by reading various information and materials, and reading information available on UWC’s website. Based on my readings, I found that one major difference between the two educational systems is how the academic unit is arranged. Specifically, in the South African system, academic units are separated by Faculties, Departments, Centres, Institutes, Schools and Units. As part of my research on the South African system, Dr. Holtman and I discussed the differences between UWC, University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch and how UWC differ from its counterparts.

I attended the South African Ph.D. Project Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa along with Dr. Holtman and her staff. The purpose of the program is to “...strive to address the local human capital requirements by increasing the number of qualified postgraduate professionals in South Africa.” I was the guest of Dr. Holtman and the conference coordinator. Attending the conference

provided another opportunity to meet faculty, students and other professionals from various institutions across South Africa.

Week Two Activities-

I met with Dr. Emmanuel Mushayikwa, the Academic Coordinator for Postgraduate Enrolment and Throughput Programme (PET) at the University of the Western Cape. His responsibilities include scheduling PET workshops (some are research and methodology courses) and all other program-related activities for the Program. Moreover, we discussed the Higher Education Program at the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL) regarding the types of courses that are offered and the need for flexible schedules (i.e., weekend courses) that are required to accommodate our diverse student population.

Dr. Holtman and I met with Professor Jan Persens and Dr. Rod Uphoff for a briefing on the goals and objectives of my visit that were proposed and accomplished thus far, as well as plans for future activities. We also discussed the conference I attended in Johannesburg, in addition to talking about PET Program and some of the changes that are being contemplated for the Graduate School.

I met with one of the doctoral students, Priscilla, to discuss her Master's degree research and then I shared ideas for designing her dissertation research. After my meeting with Priscilla, I met with Dr. Holtman to get a better understanding of the dissertation process at UWC such as supervising students, writing format, peer mentoring, etc. Once again, it was an opportunity to examine the differences between U.S. and South Africa's higher education systems. One key area of difference is that students do not work with a dissertation supervisor until they have completed the literature review and design the research. Thus, many of the students are not provided guidance on the conceptualization and design of the research question(s) or area(s) of focus. It appears that this may be an area in which we can pursue ideas for initial training and mentoring of students who are in the early stages of planning their dissertation research. My question was how much prior training does the student receive before attempting to complete the proposal?

Later that week, Dr. Holtman and I discussed and examined PET student data. As we investigated the data, we talked about various ways of utilizing the data such as PET development into a Graduate School and ways to assist students and supervisors. Later, we talked about developing an instrument to investigate students who complete the degree, students who stop out or drop out, and the reasons why they depart from the institution. During this conversation, I was able to share with Dr. Holtman some of the forms and documents utilized in the College of Education (COE) at UMSL such as graduate students forms and IRB applications.

Dr. Holtman is a prolific grant writer has been successful in securing several and large dollar amount of grant funds for her institutions. I encouraged her to create a "boast sheet" to highlight accomplishments of PET and its students. I shared information from the COE's website highlighting accomplishments of faculty and various projects and activities faculty are engaged.

Dr. Holtman and I started a research project last summer during her visit to St. Louis. We spent time working on the manuscript preparing it for publication consideration. Also, I had the

opportunity to share various articles and other information about doctoral students and alumni from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*.

Week Three Activities-

I met with Dr. Gerald Wangenge-Ouma, a faculty member in the Faculty of Education. He is interested in starting a Student Affairs Program at UWC and was interested in the Higher Education Program at UMSL. Specifically, he was interested in learning information such as the program's description, course work, faculty, etc.

Dr. Holtman and I continued to work on our manuscript about Black faculty by citizenship status. We also spent time developing a survey with the purpose of getting a better understanding of the perceptions and satisfaction level of UWC's students. We talked about how to pilot the survey, a good time to administer it, plans for the data analysis, and other important issues related to administering and analyzing a new instrument.

Also during the third week, I spent time analyzing data on Ph.D. and Master's level students. The purpose was to assess baseline data and to eventually examine trends overtime. After analyzing data, I spent time with Dr. Holtman and discussed ways to interpret the data and how it might be utilized for future program development. In addition to student data, I spent time analyzing data about the supervisors (Ph.D. & Master's level chairs).

We met with Dr. Larry Pokpas of Institutional Planning at UWC. We discussed some of the results of the institutional data I had been analyzing and ways to use the data in administrative decision making. We talked about the importance of collecting, analyzing, and utilizing institutional data, as well as the qualifications needed if UWC would hire an institutional researcher. Previously, I shared with Dr. Holtman about the Institutional Research Certificate Program at UMSL, an online program, which I manage.

Dr. Holtman and I met with another PET Program student, who is also an employee at UWC and is currently working on a Master's thesis. We worked with this student on ideas for his research to capture UWC's students' voices and research methods for designing a qualitative study.

Week Four Activities-

Most of the week was spent analyzing, interpreting and discussing data on UWC's students and supervisors. During this week, a meeting was scheduled with the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Ramesh Bharuthram. We discussed the various projects I had worked on during my visit.

Dr. Holtman and I decided to co-teach a class via interactive television (ITV) available to graduate and/or postgraduate students on UWC and UMSL's campuses. We outlined a syllabus and discuss class meetings because of time differences. A tentative date is set for summer 2011.

I spent some time with Professor Harold Hermann, Professor Emeritus and former Chair for the Faculty of Education. He and I spent some time at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE).

Summary & Future Endeavors:

Summary: My visit to UWC was spent working with students in designing research for their dissertation and Master's thesis. Most of the time was spent analyzing and interpreting existing institutional data for the purpose of program planning. Specifically, the data will assist Dr. Holtman in the development of UWC's Graduate School and give her a better understanding about students' needs and their perceptions of supervisors. Based on information and my discussion with Dr. Holtman, I confirmed her suspicion regarding the need to add classes on research design and methods for all postgraduate students to better prepare them for conducting research. Moreover, I engaged in discussion with Dr. Holtman and other administrators to discuss how these data can aid in future program planning. Lastly, I was able to provide insights on information to consider and qualifications needed for someone who would teach such courses.

Lessons Learned: Prior to my visit to UWC, I was not very knowledgeable about international higher education in general, but South Africa in particular. Time at UWC has given me valuable insight on the differences between U.S. postsecondary institutions and that of South Africa. This information is important because there is a gap in the literature regarding similarities and differences between the two types of institutions, thus suggesting the need for expanding the literature to fill this important gap.

Future Plans for Collaboration: Future collaborative activities include finalizing our manuscript and submitting it for publication consideration in the very near future. A long term goal is to offer graduate courses via interactive television (ITV) for UMSL and UWC's students. We have already discussed a course and tentatively decided that summer of 2011 will be the likely timeframe for the inaugural course. I hope to continue collaborating with Dr. Holtman, other supervisors, and postgraduate students on UWC's campus. There were other individuals in the Faculty of Education that I was supposed to meet but did not have enough time. I hope to seek other funding that will allow continual support of UWC's Graduate School including future trips that will allow for ongoing face-to-face mentoring and collaborations.