Report on:
University of Missouri South
African Education Program
(UMSAEP) Report
(UMSAEP 19 April – 15 May 2015)

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Dear UMSAEP Committee:

Firstly I wish to thank all stakeholders for the opportunity granted to participate in the 2015 UMSAEP. It was indeed an enriching and memorable experience. Thank you very much to Ms Brenda Dennis who professionally planned the travelling and accommodation.

Secondly I want to thank my host, Prof Jane Armer for her thoughtfulness and hospitality. Before my arrival Prof Armer said she would like my experience to be 'a home away from home'. It was truly remarkable.

Thank you very much to the Dean Fitzgerald Miller of the MU Sinclair School of Nursing for making me feel welcomed. I also want to thank all the staff whom I met during my visit. Everybody was very friendly.

Upon my application for the UMSAEP, I have set out objectives for the visit.

As identified there is no database of registered lymphoedema management therapists in South Africa. Assistance on how to create partnership with governmental and non-governmental agencies and healthcare professionals in order to establish a South African register.

Progress: Before I left for the visit, the Lymphoedema Association of South Africa (LOASA) was established. This was as a result of continues communication between lymphoedema management therapists as well as support from Prof Armer. Further discussions and support happened during a Lymphoedema Stakeholder Meeting in November 2014. Soon thereafter the database was established.
Preparation and writing of combined article of phase one of the study

Progress: Discussions between me and Prof Armer took place during my visit with regards to a combine article. I am pleased to say great progress has been made towards finalizing the article. The intention is to publish the article in a special addition for the Journal of Personalized Medicine: Titled: **Occurrence and characteristics of secondary lymphoedema in South Africa**

To enhance the current relationship between Missouri and the University of the Western Cape, School of Nursing, towards research and education on Lymphoedema

Progress: Conversations focused on continuing the current relationship between the School of Nursing and Missouri as well as to ensure successful future training of Manual lymph drainage and complete decongestive therapy course. (MLD & CDT), which are offered in collaboration with the Norton School of Lymphatics. A memorandum of understanding between parties involved has been drawn up and it is close to finalization. Planning has been made towards Manual lymph drainage and complete decongestive therapy course. (MLD & CDT) to be held in January 2016. Improved low cost technologies developed in MU also formed part of discussions. Further discussions will take place.

Opportunities outside the objectives of the visit had the privileged to attend the on campus:

<<Did a presentation for Maternal child health BSN students on MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH IN SOUTH AFRICA
<<Attended the 9th Annual Breast Cancer Survivors Event
<<Attended for a week PhD on campus activities
<<Visited the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center
<<Visited the Women's and Children's Hospital
<<On campus tour by Mr. R Otto
Visited and observed the Cancer rehabilitation Center
Attended the program hosted by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation
Attended the 25th Annual Nursing Banquet and Awards Ceremony
Attended the University of Missouri Sinclair School of Nursing (SSON) graduation

In summary I once again wish to thank you for the opportunity afforded to me. It was a life changing experience. Each day in Missouri was insightful and created space for learning. Various discussions created opportunities for further collaboration. My main goal is to contribute to Lymphoedema research, education and patient/client support. This visit contributed to expand my knowledge to make meaningful contributions. There is a huge interest for South African Lymphoedema management therapist to be trained. As the coordinator for the Manual lymph drainage and complete decongestive therapy course (MLD & CDT) at the School of Nursing, I have a responsibility to ensure that School of Nursing and the University of the Western Cape becomes the institution that will train high calibre Lymphoedema therapists in South Africa.

Kind Regards

Sonja Walker
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