I submitted a proposal for UMSAEP funding in August 2015. The proposed study was conceptualised with Prof. Mansoo Yu at Missouri University (Social Work_Public Health Departments) who was recommended by Prof. Rod Uphoff. Once the application was approved, arrangements were made for me to visit MU in March this year. All arrangements were put in place between Brenda Dennis (MU) and the International Relations Office at UWC (Hilda Andrews, Debra Lamson and Rushni Salie). This included my flights, airport shuttle services, accommodation, car rental, and subsistence, all of which was funded by this programme.

The visit took place in the last two weeks of March 2016. This visit involved meeting my collaborator, Prof. Yu and several other academics at MU. I also had the opportunity to attend classes, research meetings and presentations as well as deliver a presentation to a Masters class in the School of Public Health. Students showed a keen interest in the research that I presented. I used these opportunities to interact with the graduate students in the various departments.

Some time was spent on further planning of the collaborative project that Prof. Yu and I had proposed, but most of the time during the two-week visit was spent meeting with academics who were involved in similar research areas. Meetings were held with various academics with varied backgrounds such as Prof. George Johnstone of the Department of Health Psychology and Prof. Gus Carlo and his team in Human Development and Family Science.

Much of the substance abuse research done at the university was related to alcohol use. We met with Prof. Ken Sher who is in charge of the Alcohol Research Workshop as well as with other alcohol researchers such as Profs. Denis McCarthy and Bruce Bartholow both from the Department of Psychological Sciences. I also met with Prof. Kevin Everett whose research is primarily around smoking policy in Missouri.

With regard to the Neuroscience research, we met with Prof. Satish Nair, a Biological Engineer at the College of Engineering and Prof. Shaun Christ of the Department of Psychological Sciences. Prof. Christ was able to show us their neuroscience lab and give us extensive explanations for how they have used the centre and what research they had conducted, specifically with children. He showed us the MRI scanner and how
the data is recorded. He also demonstrated how the mock scanner is used to prepare children for the process of being scanned.

I met with the Directors of different schools (School of Social Work’s Prof. Margarie Sable, Masters in Public Health’s Prof. Lise Saffran). I was able to make a trip to the UMSL campus over the weekend where I met with Profs. Angela Coker and Lois Pierce. Here I was able to get a sense of the differences between the two campuses and the possibilities for different types of research at the two locations. I have subsequently had the opportunity to meet with Profs. Coker and Pierce again as well as Prof. Mathew Taylor (all from UMSL) here in Cape Town.

During May we were able to assist Prof Pierce to set up a programme for her students who will be visiting Cape Town in July as part of their Social Work training. We will meet with her and her students in July to introduce them to our Masters students and to do some joint presentations. From June to August we are hosting a graduate student of Prof Coker in order to give her some exposure to our context that will add some richness to her PhD research on body image amongst black women. Prof. Coker has also shown an interest in conducting research with the Department of Psychology at UWC. Talks are underway with myself and Dr Andipatin. Our substance abuse project in the Department of Psychology has been able to provide Prof. Mathew Taylor (UMSL) and Prof. Nicky Roman with the instrumentation needed to collect the data for the study that they are conducting in the areas of substance use and family studies.

Discussions with academics at MU also included ideas for functioning in a Psychology Department and for training of researchers, thoughts around functioning as a research intensive institution and possibilities for research collaboration across the two contexts. All of the academics that we met with had made themselves readily available for the meetings and were keen to remain in contact. They were also keen to share ideas and give advice regarding our area of research, funding opportunities, leading researchers in the field and literature to consult.

Thanks to the UMSAEP funding, I have been able to make a range of connections with MU including opportunities for UWC students to study at MU. Prof. Yu and I are in the process of setting up the data collection for our pilot project. He is doing some enquiries regarding seed funding to assist with data collection. This data collection should be completed by the end of this year. Prof. Yu is planning to visit UWC in November/December this year at which time we should be able to start looking at preliminary results. I look forward to extended collaboration with Prof. Yu and other colleagues at the Universities in Missouri. I am grateful to have been afforded the opportunity to meet with these colleagues and to forge these international ties.