To: The International Relations Office (UWC)

Report

S. Dinie
University of Missouri St. Louis
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Shafiek Dinie (UWC) – Carl Hoagland (UMSL)

What was the objective of your visit?
I am collaborating on a research project with Prof. Carl Hoagland from the University of Missouri (St. Louis), the excerpt of his abstract stated below:

Dr. Carl Hoagland in cooperation with UWC Lecturer Shafiek Dinie, will develop and implement a series of video teaching vignettes (VTV). These vignettes will be based on the teaching strategies identified by UWC faculty. The vignettes will be of primary and secondary teachers in the Cape Town area schools. The VTV’s will provide pre-service teachers in UWC pedagogy courses with examples of good teaching methods from South African primary and secondary schools. During the project: 1) teaching methods will be identified by faculty at UWC faculty; (2) video will be recorded of exemplary teaching by local teachers, (3) digital videos will be produced of the teaching methods; (4) discussion sheets for use with the VTV’s will be produced, and (5) the program will be implemented in the appropriate classes at UWC. The project will begin in March 2009 with identification and video recording. The development of the videos will be completed by July 2009 and implemented in UWC classes in the term beginning July 2009. An evaluation will be completed and submitted by February 2010.

The objective of the visit was/ is thus two-fold:

On the first level, I am consulting and collaborating on a this project with Carl Hoagland from UMSL, who is developing video vignettes capturing classroom strategies and interactions in schools in both South Africa and the United States. The aim of the vignettes is to investigate the effectiveness of using these vignettes as educational technological aids for both lecturers teaching on the pre-service teaching program, as well as a resource for pre-service teachers in the faculty of education. The use of these vignettes, will then be used in my classes at the University of the Western Cape with my undergraduate pre-service student teachers in the module – “Practicals at Schools” as well as in the various Method classes offered in the Education Faculty.
On his visit to South Africa at UWC, I thus collaborated with him in sourcing and selecting appropriate schools and teachers to visit for video-taping; ultimately I would also be involved in the translations (subtitling) of the non-English classes filmed.

My corresponding visit to the UMSL, mirrored our activities in South Africa, as we visited classrooms and filmed lessons as well as analyzing and editing the footage, selecting scenes for inclusion in the final vignettes. This process of capturing footage and developing useful vignettes is on ongoing process with both of us.

Secondly, as a lecturer in the Faculty of Education, involved in pre and in-service training of teachers at UWC, I used the visit to the UMSL to explore the kinds of practices, initiatives and innovations employed in their education faculty that could be of benefit to our own practice at UWC.

If your objective was fulfilled, to what do you contribute your success? If not, what was the reason?

In terms of the objectives mentioned above, I feel they were fulfilled successfully. Much of the success can be ascribed to the fact that Carl Hoagland and I worked excellently together as we had a shared interest in the project and we both concurred on the approach to be followed. In addition, the level of co-operation and support given to me by the UMSL staff (support staff and lecturers and the Deanship) were phenomenal – all contributing to the overall success of my visit.

If you could change any aspect of your visit, what would it have been?

Time: If having had more time, it would have been useful to experience a broader spectrum of exposure to both advantaged as well as disadvantaged schools in the US, and seeing how teaching and learning is experienced.

How could the planning and preparation for your visit have been improved by UWC?
I would like to commend staff at the International office for their professional and excellent support they offered me in preparation for this visit.

What is your overall assessment of the value of the UM / UWC Exchange Program?
It offers first-time researchers and collaborators an excellent opportunity to experience a first world experience in their various fields of interest, but moreso the interactive and experiential value with their counterparts is invaluable, where academia and share course work, teaching strategies and innovations.
If you could change any aspect of the exchange program, what would it be?
None

Did you encounter any notable problems during your visit?
None

How did your visit contribute to strengthening and improving programs at UWC?
It expands one’s perspective amongst the broader global community of colleagues in similar fields at higher education level looking at one’s own practices, especially through sharing experiences, implementing change where necessary.

Given the opportunity to participate in the exchange again, would you do so?
Yes

What, if anything about your exchange experience surprised you?
The resource infra-structure within schools and universities and how learners, despite having these resource differences, are still similar, experiencing the same kinds of challenges, as those who do not have to varying degrees of course.
Today I understand, having experienced only the state of Missouri as an example, what is meant by the terms “First world” and “Developing world”. Before, it was just a term of reference.

What did you like most about the program?
It was a 2 - 3 week visit; however the rich academic interaction with colleagues involved in a similar field is indeed a very rewarding and refreshing experience; especially sharing ideas, resources and interrogating common challenges. Colleagues are open to ideas and sharing new ideas.

What other observations would you like to share?
None

How is the knowledge and experience gained on this exchange program going to influence your future work related endeavors?
Have noted some innovations, which I need to explore further, especially in terms of the use of “podcasting” and “e-portfolios” in our contexts in the Faculty of Education.

In the pursuance of my own studies in “Indigenous Knowledge System and the school curriculum” it would be useful to network with UMSL to explore further collaborative projects.
What specifically will these future endeavors entail?
Re: Technological innovation: A need to look at setting up capacity to be able to utilize and set up above technologies; with Carl Hoagland being here from July – December 2009, this will be pursued further.

In the pursuance of my own studies in “Indigenous Knowledge System and the school curriculum” it would be useful to network with UMSL to explore further collaborative projects.

Should the exchange program be continued, If so why?
It provides local researchers and practitioners to opportunity to share on site. field interests – thus fostering capacity building with real opportunities for implementation.

Food stipends
The current subsistence stipend of $12 per meal per day appears to have been sufficient for me personally as it provided me with an average decent meal plus drinks, including tip.