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THE DIRECTOR  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
UWC

A report by Prof H O Nyongesa of a visit to Missouri University of Science and Technology (MST), Rolla on the University of Missouri South Africa Education Programme (UMSAEP).

I was selected to participate in the 2010 UM/UWC linkage program in support of my research project “Mobile Access to Information Services with Healthcare Applications – MAISHA”. I subsequently recently visited MST to discuss possibilities of research collaboration with UM researchers on the project, between 20<sup>th</sup> February and 19<sup>th</sup> March. My host was Dr Sanjay Madria of the Department of Computer Science, MST. This is a report of this visit.

#### **General Arrangements**

Satisfactory arrangements were made for the visit by both UWC and MST. Excellent plans were made for my accommodation and ground transportation in Rolla. I was provided with an office and access to the MST wireless network, and shown around the various facilities available on campus including the library and other departments at MST. An ID card and parking permit were issued for me to access these facilities.

#### **Main Contacts at MST**

The first week was spent meeting and discussing with staff at MST, including my host Dr Madria, Director of International Affairs, Dr Jeannie Hofer, Director, New Faculty Programs, Prof Ron Bieniek, and staff of Computer Science, among others. I also met with staff of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and the Intelligent Systems Research Centre, in particular Dr Ganesh Venayagamoorthy and his research team. Prof Rodney Uphoff, Director of UMSAEP visited MST at the end of the week during which we had a joint meeting with Dr Madria, Dr Hofer and Prof Hurson, Chair, Computer Science at MST.

#### **Main Highlights**

I attended various research seminars in both Computer Science and Electronic Engineering, where student research was discussed. I also presented a seminar on my research program titled ‘Computational Intelligence in Information Retrieval’, attended by staff and students of the Departments of Computer Science, and Electrical and Computer Engineering.

I was introduced to the ‘Learning Enhancement Across Disciplines’ Program at MST led by Prof Bieniek and attended the tutorial sessions of the program. This is an exciting peer-support learning program that is increasingly adopted by some of the leading universities in the USA. We discussed possibility of UWC adopting the program, and is a matter to be discussed with the Director International Affairs, UWC.

We reached an agreement that as part of the research collaboration that Dr Madria would engage some of his students on the project between May and August every year, as need be. We are currently working out the details of this arrangement. We also agreed Dr Madria would make a visit to UWC on the linkage program, and that we shall write a joint proposal for the next round of UMSAEP Cfp. Dr Madria could also donate small research equipment and devices during his visit to UWC.

We reached an agreement with Dr. Ganesh Venayagamoorthy of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering to initiate joint research in the area of Intelligent Power Systems. Ganesh is a South African currently an Associate Professor at MST and runs very well funded research laboratories. He wishes to participate in research in South Africa and chooses UWC for this. We expect to write a joint proposal with Dr Venayagamoorthy for the next round of UMSAEP Cfp.

We agreed with the Chair of Computer Science that as part of enriching the research and teaching collaboration between UWC/MST we offer a joint distance learning program. This could be offered as a separate and additional MSc in the Department of Computer Science, UWC. MST already offers a distance learning program that has enrolment from several countries across the world. A similar program with UWC has the potential to attract students from inside and outside South Africa, especially if designed with relevance to sub-Saharan Africa. Prof Hurson (Chair, Computer Science at MST) agreed to a visit to UWC at an opportune moment.



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Department of Computer Science.

