

**University of Missouri South African Education Program (UMSAEP) Report,
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**Service-Learning and University-Community Partnership within the context
Health Professions Education**

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Introduction

This year, significantly marks 25 years of academic exchanges between the University of Missouri (UM) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC). More than 400 academic staff from these two universities has been supported by the UMSAEP program since 1986. In addition to this milestone, Professor Brian O'Connell, UWC's rector and vice-chancellor was honored with an honorary doctorate for his remarkable contribution to Higher Education in South Africa and his leadership at UWC, making it one of the best educational institutes in Africa. These two historic events coincided with my exchange program to UM. I was very fortunate to participate in the celebrations. This was definitely a highlight of my exchange programme.

I wish to thank my host, Prof Richard Oliver (Dean of the School of Health Professions), who made my experience welcoming, enriching and memorable and with whom I intend to collaborate for many years to come. His attentiveness and hospitality was truly remarkable, making me feel respected and honoured and part of the UM family.

I would like to thank all the colleagues with whom I shared an office on the sixth floor (Cardiopulmonary and Diagnostic Sciences Department) in Lewis Hall, Thank you for your concern, hospitality and for making my stay so enjoyable.

I also would like to mention a few persons who were absolutely outstanding in contributing to the success of my exchange programme: Rodney Uphoff, Jim Scott, Carol Oliver, Jill Oser, Glen Heggie and Evan Prost.

Lastly, I would like to thank the staff of the UWC International Relations Office, Prof Persens, Hilda Andrews and Debra Lamson and the Dean of FCHS, Prof Mpofu who were extremely helpful and supportive.

The report will address the questions that provide the structure for the report.

i. What was the objective of your visit?

The following were the objectives for the exchange programme:

- 1: Network, share and learn.
- 2: Strengthen the collaboration between UWC and UM.
- 3: Write for publication.

Objective 1: Networking, sharing and learning

- i. To network with the staff involved with service-learning at UM.
- ii. To visit and learn about service-learning sites, including service-learning curriculum, assessment, and evaluation as well as community-university partnerships.
- iii. To present the interprofessional service-learning courses offered in the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences at UWC to UM colleagues.

MU Office of Service-Learning

The MU Office of Service Learning Mission:

To provide opportunities and academic credit for experience-based learning to promote life long commitments to social responsibility and public service. Service Learning at Mu strives to develop civic, corporate, and social responsibility while enhancing the students' personal growth and enriching the lives of persons within the community. (MU service-learning Resource Guide, p1)

I was very fortunate to meet with the director of the Office of Service-Learning, **Dr Anne-Marie Foley**, on the 15 April 2011. We shared our scope of work, operational structure, human resources, administrative support, teaching and learning challenges. We shared similar principles of service-learning and there was a common understanding on the service-learning pedagogy. We agreed that successful service-learning can only occur within a partnership framework with communities and agencies. Relationships formation was seen as one of the most important foundation of service-learning. There was agreement that it is a process that develops over time and that it needs to be strengthened and nurtured. Development of a data base of community projects was the first step in running a successful service-learning program.

This initial meeting was followed up with a visit of the offices of the Office of Service-Learning on 17 May 2011. I was met by the Service-Learning Coordinator, **Ms Cara D. Gallup**. I was introduced to their web-based system and was fascinated how well their system works making it easier for all stakeholders involved in service-learning to communicate with each other. The Service-Learning office has a well developed web-based system that includes a

comprehensive data base of community agencies, syllabi, calendar, service-learning contracts and service-learning evaluation. I was immensely impressed by the web-based student assessment process as well as the space for the partners (community, academic supervisor and student) to share their experiences on-line.

The MU Service-Learning office links students and student organizations with service-learning opportunities in Missouri. They have an extensive data base of partners. There is about 237 partners and 27 partner types including women issues, research, health, human rights, local government, community based education, education, children and youth,

Within the School of Health Professions (SHP) a field work co-coordinator, **Ms Kari Eckelkamp** coordinates field placements of students in the faculty. Most of these placements are linked to the fieldwork required by the disciplines in the SHP. There is communication between the coordinator and the Service-Learning Office regarding service-learning opportunities which is also seen as part of the fieldwork within the SHP.

Service-learning in the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences (UWC)

On the 28 April 2011, service-learning programmes in the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences (FCHS) was presented to the SHP and Social Work colleagues. The service-learning projects in the TWK region (rural site) and the UWC Community Rehabilitation Project (urban site) were the focus of the presentation. Management and operational issues as well as the challenges and strengths relating to service-learning in the FCHS were also highlighted.

Health Sciences Degree Program (BHS)

This is an undergraduate programme and is similar to what exists in the FCHS i.e. the interdisciplinary core courses. Students wanting to pursue a degree in a professional programme after graduation need to participate in the BHS programme. The programme consists of both theoretical courses and a fieldwork component. The BHS core courses include *Introduction to Health Professions*, *Public Health Principles and Practice*, *Introduction to research*, *Clinical ethics* and the *capstone/fieldwork*. This seems to present an opportunity for further collaboration in terms of UWC and UM student interactions as well as staff collaboration, as there is commonality in the course content for both these programmes.

Visit to service-learning site

At the time of the exchange, most students were preparing for final examinations and were not at the service-learning sites. However, one of the projects that I managed to visit and spend some time with was the **Adult Day Connection Centre**. The centre offered therapeutic activities, exercise, nursing care and supervision. The service-learning areas were in: Food Preparation and Serving,

Reading Proficiency, Health Care Administration, Customer Service, Adaptive Art, Adaptive Recreation, Life Skills Training, Foreign Language Proficiency and Grant Writing. I was fascinated that this centre was housed on the university premises, in fact in the building of the School of Health Professions on the ground floor. I found it to be an excellent model of university-community engagement. There is a wonderful spirit of service involving the university students and staff deriving mutual benefits from this partnership.

Objective 2: Strengthen the collaboration between UWC and UM.

Much of my time was spent on this objective. There seemed to be a huge interest from various disciplines in the UM to want to participate in staff and student exchanges and collaborations. Several meetings were held with many staff at UMC and UMKC to discuss possibilities of exchange and collaborative projects. Please see Table 1 for details of the persons and collaborative projects envisaged.

Objective 3: Writing for publication.

The objective was to collaborate with the UM colleague/s particularly in the SHP to focus on writing at least one of three topics which I had identified out of my PhD study for publication during the exchange and to continue with the writing collaboratively after the exchange programme. I did not manage to write collaboratively or to meet with colleagues around this objective. However, I managed to complete a full draft for publication entitled: *Health sciences students' attitudes and perceptions of an interdisciplinary school-based health promotion course*. The resources that were available to me in the UM library were very helpful in writing this paper. **Kate Anderson** was extremely helpful in orientating me to the amazing health sciences library and how to access the journals on-line.

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

Most of my objectives were achieved and partly objective 3. I think that I should have identified a collaborator for the paper before my visit. It was difficult building a scholarly relationship once I was there as much time was spent on the other objectives.

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

There is not much that I would change. All the logistical arrangements were made without any problems. I liked the way I was introduced to the UM colleagues and those who came to the welcome reception subsequently made contact and showed an interest in wanting to network and collaborate with me.

There was also set appointments with other academic staff at UM that was arranged by the office of the Dean. This was also very helpful and assisted me in achieving my objectives.

iv. How could the planning and preparation for your visit have been improved by UWC?

It was good, I have no suggestions. The International Relations Office staff was very helpful and supportive.

v. What is your overall assessment of the value of the UM / UWC Exchange Program?

The UM/UWC exchange programme is very unique as mentioned previously. As a UWC academic and alumnus, I feel that this relationship is to be valued and like any other relationship it needs to be nurtured to keep it going. I would like to agree with Prof Bharuthram and Prof Persens that it is time for this partnership to be taken to the next level. I am positive that there is willingness from both UWC and UM to explore innovative ways to expand the exchange programme.

vi. If you could change any aspect of the exchange program, what would it be?

There is not much that I would change. Generally, I am satisfied with the outcomes of the exchange and the grateful to be granted this opportunity and experience.

vii. Did you encounter any notable problems during your visit?

No I did not experience any problems during my visit. It was a very positive experience. I had spoken to colleagues who have been on the exchange before so I had an idea of what to expect. I was happy with the accommodation, the transport and the office space allocated to me for my duration of the exchange. All the staff was extremely welcoming and helpful. I thoroughly enjoyed the colleagues whom I shared the floor with.

viii. How would your visit contribute to strengthening and improving programs at UWC?

I have shared much of the UM service-learning model with colleagues in the Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning Unit (ITLU) as my unit is responsible for coordinating service-learning in the FCHS. I would like to share some ideas so that a more supportive and enabling environment for community engagement and service-learning are created at UWC. It is my opinion that the faculties would benefit more from the Community Engagement office at UWC if the office develop a comprehensive data base of all community engagement or service-

learning projects that exists at the university; ascertain which partnerships with community and service provider agencies needs to be developed to support service-learning or community engagement in the faculties; build and strengthen relationships and partnerships with agencies, service provider agencies, non-government organizations and communities for service-learning; connect students across the faculties with the appropriate agencies for service-learning; work more closer with faculty staff who is responsible for fieldwork or service-learning so that there is a coordination and information sharing amongst the university community and; make the partnership and service-learning information accessible and available to the broader UWC community and others sectors including UM through a website.

Lastly, I am recommending that a delegation consisting of representatives of the Community Engagement office as well as a representative from each faculty who coordinates community engagement activities, fieldwork or service-learning projects visit the Service-Learning office at UM.

Furthermore, I am also looking forward to expanding my collaboration on the e-teaching and study abroad programmes with UMC and UMKC. (See Table1).

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

Yes, most definitely. I have built an amazing network of scholars and friendships. I am looking forward to continuing with that relationship for many years to come.

x. What, if anything about your exchange experience surprised you?

The amazing academic environment, the spirit volunteerism amongst students and staff, the availability of resources to assist students in their academic needs, the manner in which I was accepted and felt part of the staff in the SHP and the astounding stature of the university in the broader community.

xi. What did you like most about the program?

As I mentioned earlier my exchange programme coincided with the celebrations of the 25 years of collaboration and also the honouring of our rector at UM this indeed was a highlight of my visit. I was also honored by the Dean Oliver and the SHP as a visiting scholar at the SHP commencement event. I loved the academic environment and the easy access to academic texts and resources.

xii. What other observations would you like to share?

I like the way the university is branded, on campus and in the shops in the broader community. It is truly a beautiful campus! The financial commitment of the UM alumni is amazing.

I liked the motto of the SHP i.e. *“To teach, to serve to discover*

Serving the community”.

xiii. How is the knowledge and experience gained on this exchange program going to influence your future work related endeavors?

Certainly the e-learning, service learning and having access to the UM library resources would assist me in my academic career.

xiv. What specifically will these future endeavors entail?

Besides what is listed in the Table1, I plan to continue to work on my publications and research interests as indicated in my proposal for the exchange.

xv. Should the exchange program be continued, If so why?

Yes, it is a wonderful opportunity for UWC staff and UM student and staff to learn from each other. We live in globalised world where it has become essential that we build networks and partnerships locally and internationally. The UMSAEP programme provides an opportunity for academics to learn, share and experience working with international scholars. In this way, we get international perspectives and together we can explore solutions to the many challenges that we experience in our part of the world.

***NB (a) Reports are shared with our colleagues at the University of Missouri. Please do not include details about visits to other institutions which may not be of relevance to the University of Missouri.**
(b) Please do not include all the minute but not essential details about your visit.

Table 1

UM Programs	Description	UWC Sites of Teaching and Learning	MU Collaborators	UWC collaborators	Dates
UMKC : MGT 5552/470 Section TBD (3 credit hours)	The course is divided into three modules: 1) Two pre-trip weekend sessions in Kansas City with lectures on concepts of global health, determinants of health, the cultural, political and economic traditions of South Africa in a 21 st century context, and the current health system of South Africa, with discussions of pressing health issues including health status, financing, manpower and government policies; 2) Seven (7) days in Cape Town with a series of lectures and site visits hosted by SOPH and ITLU at UWC that illustrate and expand on topics raised in Module 1; and 3) A post-trip capstone weekend session in Kansas City with students presenting reflection on the South African experience from their own professional perspective.	1. School of Public Health lecture rooms (UWC) 2. Various community health centres and visits to secondary and tertiary hospitals. 3. A rural community engagement experience where MU students will be staying over for one night in that community.	Michael Wood (UMKC) Arif Ahmed (UMKC)	Ehi Igumbor (SOPH) Firdouza Waggie (ITLU) Gerard Filies(ITLU) Gail Hughes (SAHSMI)	21 -27 May 2011
Social Work & Sexual Health Peer Educators	Students will visit UWC over a period of two weeks during the UWC second semester when	1. UWC Community Rehabilitation Project in	Lois Pierce (St Louis) Margie Sable (UMC) Heather Mueller (UMC)	Marcel Londt (Social Work Dept , UWC) Nicolette Roman	18-29 July 2011

Course	classes at UWC will be in session. UM students will be divided into pairs and will work in a group with the UWC health sciences students. The academic program will consist of lectures at UWC together with service-learning activities	Mitchells Plain. 2. Primary schools in Delft and Belhar.		(Social Work Department, UWC) Firdouza Waggie (ITLU, UWC) Gerard Filies, ITLU, UWC)	
School of Health Professions	Various models of MU study abroad programs are currently being explored. The design of the program will be prepared during 2011 in consultation with all the collaborators.	1. UWC campus 2. UWC Community sites	Barbara Brinkman (UMC) Judith Goodman (UMC)	Firdouza Waggie (ITLU) Gerard Filies(ITLU)	2012
	Explore on-line activity between staff and students on similar courses offered at UM and UWC.	Introduction to the Philosophy of Care Interdisciplinary Health Promotion	Carla Allen (UMC)	Firdouza Waggie	30 July -13 August 2011
UM College of Engineering	Exploring possibilities of a study abroad for engineering students		Marty Walker JR Swanegan Robert Reed	Firdouza Waggie (ITLU) Gerard Filies(ITLU)	2012