

COBEC DISPATCH

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SPJC Combines Work and Fun at Winter 2013 COBEC Conference

For many in the northern and central parts of the United States, a trip to San Pedro on Ambergris Caye in Belize in early February 2013 was just what the doctors ordered (Ph.D.’s, Ed.D’s, Psy.D’s, etc.). Serving host to more than 100 attendees, Gustavo Ellis (Dean of San Pedro Junior College) and Jane Bennett (Director of UWI Open Campus Belize and Belizean COBEC Co-Chair) showed off their Belizean hospitality by uniquely combining our COBEC work agenda with many different opportunities for our U.S. Belizean partners to enjoy the culture, the food and the sun.

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The next morning the COBEC membership met for its biannual business meeting where we heard from our three standing committees.

Mr. Neal McCrillis (Columbus State) made a special presentation from the Study Abroad Committee.

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We were reminded that the National Library Service of Belize has been invited as a full member of COBEC and it is hoped that they will be able to participate in the future. Dr. Geoff Bradshaw, Director of International Programs at Madison Area Technical College in Madison, Wisconsin made his initial presentation to the COBEC membership as they are seeking membership in COBEC. We hope to see you at our Valdosta summer meeting Geoff.

After a very gracious welcome by the Honorable Manuel Heredia, Minister of Tourism and Culture and others including Mr. Algemiro Paz, Chairperson of San Pedro Junior College Board of Governors; Mr. Jahmor Lopez, Belize District Education Management Officer; and the Belize and U.S. Co-Chairs, Ms. Jane Bennett and Dr. John Kemppainen, the attendees were presented with a series of workshops. Dr. Ellajean Gillett (MOE) did a presentation on Educational Reform in Belize; Dr. Cynthia Thompson (UB) on the Curriculum Review Initiatives at the University of Belize and Dr. Leandra Cho-Ricketts' presentation on study abroad opportunities at UB's Environmental Research Institute on Calabash Caye. The invitation was made to all COBEC partners, especially our U.S. Partners to contact UB if there is interest in collaborating. This can be an excellent opportunity for those U.S. Partners who are looking for a project in which to immerse themselves.

Gustavo made sure no one left hungry as there was an ample supply of fresh fruits, sandwiches, Johnny cakes, and yes... of course ceviche... what would San Pedro be like without ceviche. The evening at the Lion's Den provided more food, entertainment (to the music of "Rompe Raja"), and dancing. Needless to say, more than one Belikin was consumed. A great time was had by all.

And the story continues...



The meeting was adjourned and everyone was invited to participate in an afternoon of different water events. There were fast boats, glass bottom boats, snorkeling and other types of water activities. A special thanks to Gustavo Ellis for arranging this through the generosity of Mr. Miguel Alamailla, Manager of the Hol Chan Marine Reserve. We truly had a wonderful conference and a great time was had by all.



Now it's on to Valdosta, Georgia for August 1st, 2nd, and 3rd for our summer conference. Dr. Ivan Nikolov and Dean Brian Gerber have promised an exciting program. Time will be spent on re-visiting our Vision and Mission statements, review where have been and perhaps even define new goals for COBEC. Additional time will be spent reviewing the Bylaws which should be updated. A copy of the Bylaws was sent out to everyone ahead of time and we would like to have several good writers work on refining this document for us.

Ivan has provided hotel information for the greater Valdosta area and several hotels are providing COBEC discounts. So please make sure you ask for it. Those hotels are:

The Hilton Garden Inn (Rooms at \$99.00 per night plus tax) and La Quinta (Rooms at \$72.00 per night plus tax). The email address for the Hilton Garden Inn is Andreea.Simmons@Hilton.com and the telephone number is (229) 219-1011.



Wanted!!!!!!

Have you seen these Partners???

They have gone missing from COBEC.

If you find them and bring them to COBEC I will buy you a beer!!!!

We Miss You!!!!



Adrian Leiva
Muffles Junior College



Michael Brennen
Hillsborough Community College



John Anderson
Georgia Perimeter College

It's Official.... COBEC Receives 501C 3 Tax Exempt Status

As many of you may already know, COBEC was founded in the mid-1980s when a group of U.S. and Belizean educators and after several of our partners, Murray State University and Western Kentucky University, had received federal grants for educational initiatives in Belize. Mr. Ernest Raymond (Head of the Belize Teachers College at that time) had expressed concern over many of the challenges facing Belize, particularly with the number of projects and proposals coming from the U.S., and a need to coordinate and evaluate these projects that would provide maximum benefit for Belize. An initial meeting was held in the summer of 1988 at Murray State University to explore forming a cooperative group that would share information and work together to determine how best to develop support for higher education in Belize. In that early meeting, representatives from the University College of Belize, Belize Teachers College, Belize Technical College (together now known as the University of Belize), and the Ministry of Education met with four U.S. Institutions; Murray State University, Western Kentucky University, University of North Florida and Ferris State University in Murray, Kentucky to begin the process of forming what is COBEC today. COBEC became incorporated as a nonprofit organization in Georgia on January 12, 1999 and Valdosta State University was and has been listed as the home address ever since.

Through some great work and perseverance by our U.S. Treasurer, Ms. Susan Ralph, who collaborated with the professional CPA for Bainbridge College and attorneys in Georgia, the final documents were put into proper format and submitted to the Federal Internal Revenue Service for consideration and on April 2, 1013 COBEC became recognized as not just a nonprofit corporation, but a Tax Exempt corporation under the Public Charity section of the Federal IRS 501C 3 code. What this means is that we are able to receive funds from organizations and individuals for our designed purpose(s) and provide a receipt to the donor for tax purposes. It also means that for many grant applications, be they federal or private, we are eligible to enter into the competition for these funds. Most require the recipient to be tax exempt.

So Kudos to Susan, she did a fantastic job and stuck with it to the end. Thanks Susan!



COBEC on Facebook

At our summer conference in 2012 at Ole Miss, our colleague Carly Wynne Womack created a page for us on Facebook. She created 9 different discussion thread identifying areas where U.S. and Belizean partners are able to collaborate. Susan Ralph and Kim Shackelford appear to be the only ones who have posted anything. I know that we are all busy, but this would be a great way for us to communicate and share thoughts and ideas. If you have not joined our COBEC Facebook page yet I would encourage you to do so. It's easy to get to.. www.facebook.com/cobecinformation .

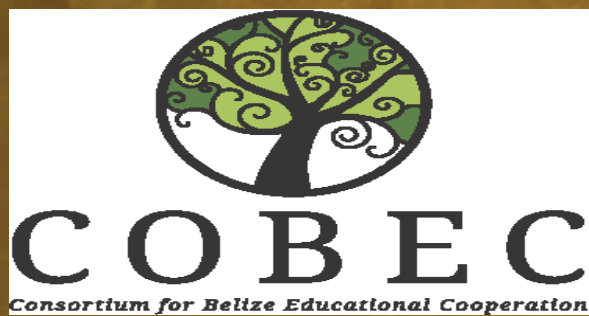
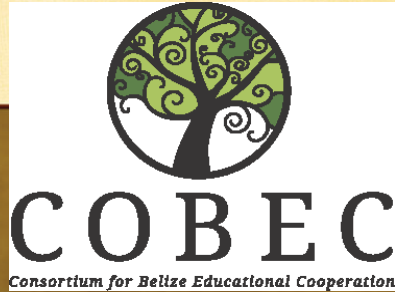
COBEC Webpage Update

Folks, we need to decide what to do about our COBEC website. Neither site is up to date. I have asked Susan to check with Brinkster to find out how much they would charge to monitor and manage our webpage. We should discuss this at our business meeting.



Winter 2013

COBEC DISPATCH



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