



COBEC Summer Conference
University of North Georgia
Zoom Online Platform
Monday, 23rd November 2020

General Meeting:

Attendees:

Name	Organization/Institution	Name	Organization/Institution
Andy Novobliski	University of North Georgia	Fermin Magaña	Sacred Heart Junior College
Karen Martinez	Ecumenical Junior College	Eleanor Gillett	Wesley Junior College
Marlon Brown	Corozal Junior College	Rita Curtis	Campbellsville University
Betty Flinchum	UNF/Emertius	Jeanne Garbutt	Ministry of Education
Allison Martin	Bossier Parish Community College	Noel Carballo	Corozal Junior College
Steven Gun	Murray State University	Yianira Oliveras	University of Texas at Tyler
John Kemppainen	UNF/Emeritus	Javiola Aragon	Ministry of Education
Emilia Hodge	University of Florida	Hugo Gonzalez	Escolar Centro de Mexico
Ivan Nicolov	Valdosta State University	Sharmayne Saunders	University of West Indies Open Campus
Marie Scott Young	Independence Junior College	Gustavo Ellis	San Pedro Junior College
Eve Aird	Galen University	Warren Hodge	Emeritus Member
Susan Catapano		Perla Marin	Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College
Sharon Hundley	Campbellsville University	Carly Womack-Wynne	University of North Georgia

Neil McCrillis	University of Illinois Chicago	Jeanne Link	Sacred Heart Junior College
Edward Leach	NISOD	Noel Carballo	Corozal Junior College
Geoff Bradshaw	Madison College	Sharon Hudley	Campbellsville University
Noel Young	Belize Medical College	Audrey Robin	Invited Guest
Lusiola Castillo	Belize National Library	Larry Daniels	University of Tyler at Permain Basin
Dereyck Satchwell	Ministry of Education	Froylan Gilharry	San Pedro Junior College
Wes Hickey	University of Texas at Tyler		

Apologies:

- Dr. Larry Daniels, University of Texas at Permain Basin

1.0 Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Dr. Andy Novobliski, US COBEC co-chair.

2.0 Signing of National Anthems

The national of Belize and the United States of America were played.

3.0 Remarks from COBEC Co-Chairs

Dr. Novobliski and Dr. Martinez welcomed the meeting attendees.

4.0 Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was accepted as tabled.

5.0 Location for Winter 2021 Conference Gathering

The host of the Winter 2021 conference is Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College. It was commented that the rate of infection in Belize is increasing and so the prudent thing to do is to have an online meeting. Also, the state of emergency which limits the number of participants will not allow a face-to-face conference meeting to happen. After some discussion, a motion to move the meeting from a face-to-face meeting to an online modality was made by Dr. Nikolov and

seconded by Dr. Kemppainen. A majority of the membership agreed to have an online winter conference.

Mr. Gonzales informed that he will be working with Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz to plan for the Winter Conference meeting.

6.0 Re-envisioning of COBEC Website

One of the discussions in the summer conference was the idea of moving the COBEC website to a commercial host. Deborah and Ivan are pleased with the idea and have offered to be part of the transition team to move the COBEC website from a member institution (Valdosta State University) server to a commercial host.

Dr. Hickey informed that several UTT student workers have evaluated the present COBEC website and have made recommendations to drive traffic and make it appealing. He also commented that the new website also goes in line with the work Mrs. Ingrid Alvarado is doing for COBEC. It was suggested that the name of the new website be: **COBECpartners.org**. Several commercial hosting options will be explored.

7.0 Updating COBEC By-laws

Dr. Novobliski proposed a new class of membership, that is, Individual Members. Dr. Novobliski shared that this classification of membership will need to be supported a Belize institution and US institution in good standing; two-thirds of the membership need to support the membership application; the membership will be reviewed every three (3) years and small fee will be charged.

Several concerns were raised:

- What procedures will be followed?
- How meeting will be conducted?
- Will individual members have voting rights?
- Can individual members hold office?
- Can individual members be suspended if they aren't active (attending meetings) but paying their membership dues?

It was suggested that:

- Other membership classifications be reviewed;
- Roberts Rules of Order be followed to maintain meeting structure; and
- COBEC By-laws be looked at holistically.

Dr. Martinez informed that the last review of the by-laws was in 2015. Dr. Kemppainen suggested that a committee be formed to look at the by-laws in its entirety. Dr. Novobliski, Dr. Martinez, Dr. McCrillis and Mr. Brown will meet to take a look at article three (3), discuss the issues surrounding the individual membership proposal and forward a draft to the membership.

Dr. Novobliski raised the idea of an Advisory Board. It was suggested that the purpose, role, composition and monetary contribution of the Advisory Board be defined. Several members indicated that they liked the idea. Dr. Aird shared that an Advisory Council, comprising of past COBEC chairs, had been previously formed. Dr. Bradshaw suggested that a one-off meeting be convened to solicit feedback on the idea of Advisory Board. This matter will be further discussed in the next meeting.

8.0 Standing Committee Reports

8.1 College Fair

Mr. Brown provided a brief report. He informed that the tentative plan is to have an online college fair. He indicated that he was hoping that the US partners would have time to prepare for the online fair. US institutions were encouraged to look at their websites for resources to share with Belize students.

8.2 Café

Mr. Magana reported that the committee identified areas to improve faculty teaching online. These include tools to better deliver (conduct) their courses online, and evaluation of courses and lecturers online. The committee is planning to have in January 2021 a session to help faculty with tools for online teaching.

Dr. Aird felt that it was urgent to provide school counsellors training on how they can help students and administration cope with the impact of COVID-19.

8.3. Study Abroad

Dr. Aird shared with committee members the results of the study abroad survey. She noted that 15 members institutions had responded with only two (2) Belize institutions participating. She informed that the survey will be sent again. Mr. Gonzalez will be asked to encourage Belize institutions to participate in the survey.

Dr. Aird shared other committee ideas:

- Develop a course that will allow for virtual exchanges of faculty and students using social media;
- Internationalize our programs; and
- Seek grant funding to facilitate two-way student and faculty exchanges.

Dr. Nikolov spoke on the internationalization of curriculum, and the importance of developing a structure. He advised that it would be good to advocate and work with interested faculty to discuss their mutual interests. A conversation with the US Embassy may be necessary to discuss what areas are eligible to receive funding.

8.4 Action Research

Dr. Hodge reported on three (3) tasks that committee had discussed in the summer conference:

- Develop an action research guide which is being prepared by Carrie Klima;
- Identify literature reviews and meta-analysis on Action Research which will be posted in the new COBEC website once it is ready; Dr. Hodge took responsibility for this task; and
- Conduct action research survey targeting teachers and principals in Belize and professionals in the US; Ms. Garbutt indicated that a survey has been piloted and developed which was sent to principals in Belize. A stratified random sampling strategy was used to identify a sample. Primary and secondary school leaders were identified who were asked to facilitate the email address of their teachers and principals. The data will be available in mid-December and will be used to inform of the way forward. The data will be shared in the winter conference.

Dr. Hodge highlighted that rationale for Action Research:

- Professionalize teaching;
- Enhance the motivation and efficacy of principals and teachers;
- Meets the needs of an increasingly diverse student body;
- Achieve success with standards-based reforms.

Dr. Hickey spoke about the online journal which will allow both Belize and US scholars collaborate and produce research. The online journal can be posted on the COBEC website.

9.0 General Updates (& Requests from Membership)

9.1 Dr. Aird acknowledged NISOD for organizing summer professional activities. She commented that her staff attended the summer conferences and developed professional networks with other NISOD members who were very supportive. The workshops were very useful.

9.2 Dr. Hickey informed that he is working with Mrs. Garbutt to develop training for secondary school teachers in mental health issues such as drug abuse, domestic abuse, depression social media issue and more. Professional development hours will be awarded.

10. Closing

The COBEC officers gave thanks to the membership for taking part in the healthy and productive discussion. It was commented that there is the need to institutionalize the mid-term meeting. The meeting ended at 3:41 p.m.

Prepared by,

Marlon Brown
Recording Secretary