



COBEC[™]

Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation

***Evaluating the Impact of the Consortium for Belize
Educational Cooperation (COBEC) on
Belizean and U.S. Partner Institutions***

*Warren A. Hodge
Emilia M. Hodge
Betty Flinchum
Kathaleena Edward Monds
Deborah Davis
Ethel Arzu
Cynthia Thompson
Eve Aird*

July 2018

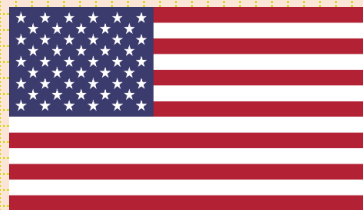


TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
LIST OF APPENDICES	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF FIGURES.	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ix
PART ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	16
Introduction	16
COBEC’S Origin and Early History	17
Overarching Methodology	20
Evaluation Plan	20
Purpose and Evaluation Questions	20
Evaluation Design	22
Summary of Part One	23
PART TWO: QUANTITATIVE DESIGN, METHODOLOGY, AND RESULTS	24
Design and Methodology	24
Instrumentation and Participants	24
Data Collection	24
Data Management and Treatment	24
Data Analysis	25
Results	26
Question 1: Professionalization Programs and Activities	26
Question 2: Internationalization of Member Institutions	28
Question 3: COBEC’s Organizational Capacity	29
Responses to open-ended questions	34
Summary of Part Two	40
PART THREE: ECONOMIC IMPACT	42
Document Review and Economic Impact Analysis	42
Economic Impact Analysis	42
Economic Impact on the U.S	45
Summary of Part Three	46

PART FOUR: QUALITATIVE DESIGN, METHODOLOGY, AND RESULTS	47
Purpose and Design	47
Methodology	47
Instrumentation and Participants	47
Data Collection	47
Subjectivity and positionality	48
Confirming findings	49
Data Treatment and Management	49
Definition of Terms	49
Alignment of the survey and interview questions	50
Data Analysis Procedures	51
Section 1 Results	59
Question 1: Professionalization Programs and Activities	59
Question 2: Internationalization of Member Institutions	69
Question 3: COBEC’s Organizational Capacity	83
Section 2 Results	86
Policies and Membership	87
Substantive Accomplishments: Programs and Activities	87
Professional and Personal Benefits	89
Summary of the Qualitative Study	94
PART FIVE: INTEGRATION OF RESULTS	95
The Integration Process	95
Question 1: Professionalization Programs and Activities	96
Question 2: Internationalization of Member Institutions	101
Question 3: COBEC’s Organizational Capacity	107
First Group of Related Ancillary Questions: Challenges and Recommendations	109
Second Group of Related Ancillary Questions: Substantive Accomplishments	112
Third Group of Related Ancillary Questions: Positive, Negative, and Personal Impacts	114
Summary of Part Five	117
PART SIX: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	119
Summary of the Methodology	119
Major Findings	120
Professionalization Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations	120
Internationalization Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations	124
Strengthening Capacity Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations	126
COBEC’s Most Substantive Accomplishments	130
Limitations	130
Overall Impact	131
REFERENCES	133

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix		Page
A.	COBEC's Early Meetings	142
B.	COBEC Member Institutions	146
C.	COBEC's Goals and Objectives	149
D.	Informed Consent and Survey Questionnaire	151
E.	List of COBEC's Past Projects and Programs	157
F.	Categorization of COBEC's Past Projects and Programs	161
G.	COBEC Publications, Grants, and Media	162
H.	Belize Visitor 8-Question Survey	163
I.	Informed Consent and the Interview Questionnaire	164
J.	Compiled Coded Text Segments for Participant 1	167
K.	Compiled Coded Text Segments for Participant 5	169
L.	Tables 18.2-18.13 Definition of the Categories	171

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	The Evaluation Plan	21
2.	Number, Percent & Characteristics of Survey Participants	25
3.	Participant's level of agreement regarding COBEC's collaborative programs and activities	26
4.	Participant's level of agreement regarding COBEC's contributions to the internationalization of member institutions	28
5.	Participant's level of agreement regarding COBEC's organizational capacity to meet needs in Belize and COBEC's member institutions	30
6.	Participants' level of satisfaction with various aspects of COBEC	31
7.	Participant's level of agreement regarding COBEC's impact* on specific sectors in Belize and the U.S.	33
8.	Sample Study Abroad Economic Impact Model	44
9.	Sample Study Abroad Model showing a Multiplier Effect of COBEC Schools Using \$38,272BZ as the Base Amount	45
10.	Sample of US institutions that have hosted Belizean Students for Higher Education Degrees	46
11.	Description of Participants	48
12.	Cohen's Coefficients Between PI and Raters 1, 2 and 3*	50
13.	Means-End Analysis Based on Spradley's Semantic Relationships	51
14.	Spradley's Semantic Relationships	53
15.	Relationships Across Categories and Terms for the Theme "Advance Professionalization"	54
16.	Relationships Across Categories and Terms for the Theme "Internationalization of Member Institutions"	54
17.	Relationships Across Categories and Terms for the Theme "Strengthen Organizational Capacity"	55
18.1.	Definition of the Category 'Increase International Collaboration' with 7 Three Characteristics	56

19.	‘Professionalization’ Categories, Subcategories, and Number of Participants	59
20.	‘Internationalization’ Categories, Subcategories, Number Participants	70
21.	‘Strengthen Org Capacity’ Categories, Subcategories, Number of Participants	84
22.	Substantive Accomplishments with Number of Participants and Excerpted Examples	90
23.	Professional and Personal Benefits with Number of Participants and Excerpted Examples	92
24.	Side-by-Side Joint Display Showing Integration of Survey and Interview Results for Professionalization	100
25.	Side-by-Side Joint Display Showing Integration of Survey and Interview Results for Internationalization	106
26.	Side-by-Side Joint Display Showing Integration of Survey and Interview Results for Strengthen Organizational Capacity	108
27.	Side-by-Side Joint Display Showing Integration of Survey and Interview Results for Substantive Accomplishments	113
28.	Side-by-Side Joint Display Showing Integration of Positive, Negative, and Personal Impacts	116

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

Page

1.	Creswell’s Convergent Design	22
2.	Agreement with COBEC’s Collaborative Programs and Activities	27
3.	Agreement with COBEC’s Contributions to the Internationalization of Member Institutions	29
4.	Agreement with COBEC’s organizational capacity to meet needs in Belize and COBEC’s member institutions	31
5.	Participants’ level of satisfaction with various aspects of COBEC	32
6.	Kuckartz’s evaluative text analysis process	52
7.	MAXQDA collapsed code system showing themes and colored clusters representing coded segments with weighted values 2-3 for each participant.	57
8.	MAXQDA expanded code system showing themes, categories, and colored clusters representing coded segments with weighted values 2-3 for each participant.	58

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This evaluation was a collaborative effort that involved a volunteer team of COBEC members from Belize and U.S. institutions. We were fortunate to have insight and advice from two of the

founding members—Betty Flinchum, University of North Florida, and Cynthia Thompson, University of Belize. Other team members included Eve Aird, Galen University; Ethel Arzu, University of Belize; Deborah Davis, Valdosta State University; Emilia Hodge, University of Florida; Warren Hodge, University of North Florida; and Kathaleena Edward Monds, Albany State University.

We would also like to recognize and acknowledge the vision and accomplishments of the other four founding members, who collaborated and jointly established and developed the consortium. These distinguished individuals were Tracy Harrington, Ernest Raymond, John Petersen, and Sir Colville Young.

The evaluation team is also grateful for the support of past and present COBEC officers and their encouragement and moral and financial support from the inception of this project: Jane Bennett (Belize Co-chair), Neal McCrillis (U.S. Co-chair), Karen Martinez (Belize Treasurer & Secretary), and Deborah Davis (U.S. Treasurer).

The team also expresses its appreciation to the following individuals for their assistance during different stages of the evaluation:

- Bradley Osburn, Academic Assistant, University of Florida
- Megan Crews, Graduate Assistant, Valdosta State University
- Kelly Ranch, Adjunct Professor, University of North Florida
- Tenae Branch, Doctoral Student, University of North Florida
- Shelletta Baker, Doctoral Student, University of North Florida

Finally, our gratitude goes to the COBEC membership for their support of this work, in particular, those members who completed and returned the survey questionnaire, those who participated in individual interviews, and others who provided moral support throughout the project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International higher education consortia are vehicles that promote and support the internationalization of member institutions through intercultural collaboration and partnerships. They develop and maintain alliances based on compatibility and mutual respect (Beerrens, 2004). The Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation (COBEC), established in 1988, is one such organization. This report is based on the evaluation of programs and activities associated with COBEC's three overarching goals of professionalizing higher education in Belize, internationalizing member institutions, and strengthening its organizational capacity. Specifically, the evaluation was guided by three questions:

1. To what extent has COBEC professionalized or designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities that address higher education in Belize?
2. To what extent has COBEC contributed to the internationalization of member institutions?
3. To what extent has COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and the internationalized member institutions?

The goals and their associated subgoals (26 in total) clarify and elaborate the consortium's purpose and mission, and all are consistent with the international consortia goals discussed in the literature (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Flora & Hirt, 2010; Helms, 2015; Scott, 2006). Programs and activities associated with the three major goals were implemented principally through partnerships and intercultural collaboration—the “social glue” that enabled and facilitated the execution of COBEC's mission. Implementing each goal required institutional members' interaction and engagement, which are based on camaraderie, cooperation, collegiality, and trust—behaviors that were verifiably demonstrated during the consortium's history.

Study Design and Analyses

Creswell's (2015) mixed-method convergent design framed the evaluation. For the quantitative part, the team used a survey design and administered the survey instrument to all 70 COBEC members, of whom 36 returned the instrument—a return rate of 51%. For the qualitative part, the team collected data on the beliefs and perspectives of 11 COBEC members. Both data sets were analyzed separately, after which the results were merged and integrated. The team then analyzed the survey data with descriptive statistics, and the interview data with constant comparative analysis. The team also conducted an economic impact study, and, where appropriate, referred to archived documents to clarify and support results from the survey. Finally, the team used several narrative strategies to integrate findings from the survey, the economic impact study, and the interviews.

Major Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the study found that the consortium has accomplished the majority of activities associated with its three overarching goals. Based on confirming evidence from the survey and interview data, four activities stood out as the most substantial:

- facilitating and strengthening collaboration among all COBEC institutions,
- implementing programs that target specific professional development needs,
- sponsoring and facilitating graduate or advanced study programs, and
- sponsoring and facilitating study-abroad programs.

In addition, although only 69% of survey respondents were in agreement with the statement that COBEC has identified and developed sources of financial aid for Belizean students who study at non-Belizean institutions, data from the economic impact study and the interviews found that COBEC's work with assisting students with financial aid was among its major successes.

Question 1: To what extent has COBEC professionalized or designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities that address higher education in Belize?

Conclusions

1. COBEC has addressed several higher education needs in Belize, as shown in the findings from the economic study and from the quantitative and qualitative studies. The economic impact study showed that 13 U.S. institutions hosted 1,176 Belizean students for higher education degrees, a majority of survey respondents responded favorably (agreed) to 11 of 14 (86%) of the professionalization subgoals, and a majority of interview participants confirmed six of the subgoals. The principal collaborative activities were professional development, advanced degree training, and forging articulation agreements. In addition, COBEC had a positive impact on library development in Belize, primarily through librarian training and book donations.

2. COBEC has been moderately successful in developing quality assurance initiatives, but has not adequately addressed the goal of organizing a clearinghouse for donations of equipment and educational materials, pursuing a research agenda, and assessing the impact of scholarship support. In addition, comprehensive strategic planning was not an activity the consortium regularly conducted.

Recommendations

1. COBEC should continue its extensive professional development activities for higher education faculty, students, and staff, including planning joint professional-learning initiative projects with the Association of Tertiary Level Institutions in Belize (ATLIB) and other tertiary entities. What is missing from the consortium's professional development activities is documentary evidence of the quality and effectiveness of professional development workshops and seminars.

Consequently, professional development presenters need to evaluate and document their presentations. They should also submit evaluation documents to the individuals who are responsible for archiving COBEC's materials.

2. The consortium should continue to provide graduate degree opportunities for Belizean faculty, staff, and administrators and continue to address institutional resources needs related to libraries,

technology, and laboratories. COBEC should also continue the collaboration and cooperation responsible for its accomplishments and continue to forge articulation agreements by identifying member institutions that have not participated in the process and solicit their participation.

3. The consortium should identify quality assurance best-practice techniques and their applications, use them to enhance higher education in Belize, and support each institution's quality assurance initiative.
4. COBEC should determine whether it still needs a clearinghouse for donations of equipment and educational materials. If so, a committee should be formed to decide when and where the clearinghouse should be established and what kinds of equipment and educational materials will be collected and archived in it.
5. COBEC needs to develop and pursue a viable research agenda and encourage and support the development of more collaborative grants and research publications. Pursuing an active research agenda is of utmost importance because data and results from empirical studies could be used to support and advance the work of the consortium. The literature related to higher education consortia has repeatedly identified knowledge creation and knowledge transfer as important reasons for improving higher education through empirical research (Altbach & Seaman, 2007; Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter, 2015; Flora & Hirt, 2010; Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Knight, 2005; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009). Also, COBEC needs to continue working collaboratively with ATLIB to design and conduct needs assessments that identify issues and challenges that impede institutional and academic progress and work collaboratively to address them.
6. The consortium needs to ensure that students' needs related to academic advising and support services are adequately addressed.
7. COBEC needs to examine evaluation approaches and methods and conduct a more extensive and inclusive evaluation of its impact on higher education in Belize and the United States.
8. COBEC needs to develop and execute a working plan to assist Belizean institutions with becoming accredited, and to be resolute about its implementation, mainly because accreditation will help Belize's tertiary institutions enhance and maximize their capabilities in research, teaching, and community service.

Question 2: To what extent has COBEC contributed to the internationalization of member institutions?

Conclusions

1. COBEC has successfully contributed to the internationalization of member institutions. The extent of the contributions was substantiated by the economic, survey, and interview data. The economic impact study documented the financial impact on both U.S. and Belizean communities, and the survey and interview findings confirmed that COBEC successfully accomplished three of the four internationalization subgoals: exchanging of faculty, students, and staff between academic institutions; organizing study-abroad programs; and identifying and developing sources of financial aid for students. These activities are consistent with the internationalization core concepts and activities of mobility, knowledge transfer, cooperation, and international education (Kehm & Teichler, 2007).
2. Study abroad was among COBEC's significant accomplishments. Thirteen U.S. institutions have hosted Belizean students for study abroad; hundreds of students have benefited from COBEC's work in this area. No other activity has received as many superlatives from respondents.
3. COBEC has successfully developed or provided a variety of financial assistance that has supported students during their academic engagement. Nevertheless, the consortium needs to do more.
4. COBEC was not successful in developing curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions on aspects of culture, history, and society. The consortium also was not successful at using professional resources available through Belizean member institutions. Notwithstanding a lack of progress with developing the curricula of U.S. member institutions, COBEC has nevertheless promoted cultural understanding between Belize and U.S. by jointly engaging in myriad cultural events and by facilitating student interactions.

Recommendations

1. The consortium should continue to support faculty, staff, and student exchanges among COBEC institutions, as the findings show that exchanges were among its most successful accomplishments that facilitated the internationalization of member institutions.
2. COBEC should continue to provide study-abroad opportunities for Belizean and non-Belizean students as well as design and conduct empirical studies that focus on students' study-abroad experiences.
3. The consortium should identify reliable and sustainable funding sources, raise money for scholarships and grants, and continue to encourage Belizean higher education institutions to increase funding for their programs and activities.
4. The consortium needs to decide whether or not the goal of developing curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions on aspects of Belizean culture, history, and society is still essential, and, if so, whether or not the organization should archive it. If the goal is not essential, COBEC needs to revise or delete it from among its

internationalization goals. It should be noted, however, that the collaborative use of professional resources from Belizean institutions at U.S. institutions could further strengthen existing institutional partnerships, create new ones, and, in the process, broaden COBEC's influence and international affiliations.

Question 3: To what extent has COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and the internationalized member institutions?

Conclusions

1. Of the three overarching goals, strengthening organizational capacity registered the lowest percentage of agreement among survey respondents.
2. COBEC has not successfully pursued its goal of designing and implementing a capacity-strengthening strategy for obtaining grant funding.
3. COBEC would benefit from establishing a secretariat, a permanent administrative office responsible for administering and supervising the consortium's affairs. The consortium is at a point in its development where a secretariat is needed to plan, organize, coordinate, and shepherd its administrative and operational affairs.
4. COBEC has not adequately addressed the goal of initiating a center or institute to serve as a facilitating entity for COBEC activities.

Recommendations

1. COBEC needs to design and implement a strategy for obtaining grant funding to support its projects in Belize. The consortium should appoint and authorize a committee to develop and implement a robust fundraising program that identifies and solicits funds from multiple sources and donors. The consortium should use a variety of approaches to acquire funds for its programs and activities. Among the approaches should be a "basket of committed donors" on whose largesse COBEC could rely.
2. COBEC should revisit its goal of initiating a center or institute to serve as a facilitating entity for COBEC activities and decide whether it is worth pursuing. If so, the consortium should develop a feasible plan and be resolute about its implementation.
3. COBEC should review international guidelines (e.g., Updegorve, 2007) on forming a successful consortium and create a secretariat (or a paid half-time position) to provide administrative support for its activities. The consortium could initiate the process by developing a plan that clarifies the administrative structure and functions of a secretariat or one that clarifies the duties and responsibilities of the individual who will fill the role of secretary, administrator, or director.

4. COBEC should continually work toward well-planned, productive biannual meetings that contribute to strengthening organizational capacity. The quality and effectiveness of the biannual meetings were of concern to some members. Some believed that attendees needed more time for meet-and-greets and less time listening to presentations and reports.

Overall Impact

The consortium is strong, with member institutions committed to COBEC's mission and goals, and serving as resources with specialized expertise. As new members join the organization, they broaden its geographic and national representation. Member institutions are recognized as valuable resources, and many have established strong relationships that are meaningful and mutually beneficial. These collaborative partnerships have advanced graduate and study-abroad programs that have positively impacted the lives of Belizean and U.S. members. Overall, COBEC has transformed the lives of numerous Belizean and U.S. students.

The consortium's impact on Belize and its higher education system has been extensive. It can be seen in the number of students who have participated in study-abroad programs and completed bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees (e.g., more than 1,176); the amount of funds that U.S. institutions have donated to Belizean students (approximately \$5,955,000USD to \$11,910,000USD); the number of individuals who have participated in and benefited from professional development offerings in workshops and seminars; the number of articulation agreements that were forged between Belizean and non-Belizean members; the sources of financial support that were identified and established for Belizean students; and, in particular, the partnerships that exist between member institutions. COBEC's graduates are contributing in positive ways to the development and advancement of Belize's socioeconomic, educational, political, and cultural life in Belize. They expend time and energy in private- and public-sector occupations in Belize's six districts.

U.S. partner institutions have likewise been affected by COBEC's work and have benefited from the opportunities that COBEC has provided for them to engage in academic work through collaborative partnerships. They also have benefited from the cross-cultural experiences that enhanced their understanding of Belize's history, socioeconomic system, and culture. Both faculty and students from U.S. member institutions have welcomed and embraced opportunities to establish and build strong personal and professional relationships that have enhanced their disciplines, fields of study, and academic programs.

Essentially, the consortium has been an effective vehicle for professionalizing higher education in Belize and for internationalizing member institutions. High levels of cooperation exist among consortium members and serve as a strong foundation that supports and facilitates the execution of COBEC's programs and activities. Nevertheless, the consortium could be much stronger and more effective if it improved its organizational capacity.

In sum, COBEC is unique in that it has multiple foci: It does not have a lead institution, as do some higher education consortia; and U.S. member institutions are accredited, while most Belize institutions are not. The findings of this evaluation demonstrate that, despite these unique aspects, COBEC has had a positive impact on higher education in Belize and on its U.S. member

institutions. The impact on higher education in both countries resulted from and was facilitated by intercultural collaborations, partnerships, and collegiality, which rest on a foundation of respect and trust. These factors explain why we can conclude with a high degree of certainty that COBEC, primarily through its professionalizing and internationalizing programs and activities, is fulfilling its purpose and mission.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

During COBEC's summer conference at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW) in July, 2015, eight members volunteered to conduct a study of COBEC's impact on partner institutions and Belize. The membership at that meeting agreed that after 26 years of existence, it was time to chronicle the history and achievements and evaluate whether, and to what extent, the consortium had fulfilled its mission and achieved its major goals (Frechtling, 2002).

The purposes of the study were to (a) document COBEC's activities and outcomes in Belize and the US, (b) examine the impact of COBEC on Belizean and US higher education institutions and the country of Belize, and (c) identify opportunities for further engagement that could expand impact of the consortium. It is hoped that results of the evaluation would help to strengthen the consortium's policies, programs, and activities.

In large part, this evaluation is a self-study because the evaluation team, participants who completed the survey, and interviewees are all consortium members. The volunteer group that conducted the study included Dr. Eve Aird, Provost at Galen University; Dr. Ethel Arzu, Quality Assurance Officer, University of Belize; Deborah Davis, Certified Archivist, Professor and Director, Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections; Dr. Kathaleena Edward Monds, Professor of Management Information Systems and Co-Director, Center for Economic Education/Small and Minority Entrepreneurship, Albany State University; Dr. Betty Flinchum, Emeritus Professor in Education, University of North Florida; Dr. Emilia Hodge, Director, Office of Graduate International Outreach in the Graduate School at the University of Florida; Dr. Warren Hodge, Associate Professor, University of North Florida; and Dr. Cynthia Thompson, Assistant Provost, University of Belize.

The team began the study by drafting a plan of work and setting a timetable for completion. Roles were identified, and Dr. Emilia Hodge was elected chair and charged with organizing the plan of work and conducting the survey part of the study (Part 2). Dr. Flinchum wrote the history of COBEC (Part 1), Deborah Davis and Dr. Edward Monds reviewed historical documents and researched and wrote the economic impact of the consortium (Part 3). Dr. Warren Hodge prepared the study IRB documents, developed the survey and interview questionnaires, conducted qualitative and synthesis parts of the evaluation (Parts 4, 5 and 6), and assisted with framing and writing the final report. Drs. Ethel Arzu and Dr. Cynthia Thompson assisted with the interviews and editing, and Dr. Eve Aird communicated with Belizean graduates of COBEC institutions. The team began the work during the fall of 2015. Dr. Emilia Hodge gave an interim report at the COBEC summer conference held at Columbus State University in July, 2016. The team also presented a preliminary report on the study's progress during the February 2017 winter conference hosted by Galen University in San Ignacio, Belize.

An important part of the assessment was the review of original documents and historical records on why and how COBEC was founded. Deborah Davis, COBEC Archivist, made the historical documents available to committee member Betty Flinchum, who wrote the early history of the consortium. Dr. Tracy C. Harrington, Director of International Programs and Professor of Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences (1991-2005), and a founding member of COBEC, donated a number of documents that described COBEC's origination and development. The papers were contained in eight boxes and include information on by-laws, articles of incorporation, correspondence between members and officers, grant requests/approvals, meeting information, travel information, records of organizations activities, paperwork for/of proposals, minutes of meetings, and other documents necessary for managing and maintaining a program. Other materials reviewed for consortium's history were donated to the University of North Florida library by Dr. Pritch Smith and Dr. Betty Flinchum. Minutes of the original meetings were used to document the consortium's rationale for its establishment, its basic tenets and organizational framework, deliberations and activities of the early members, founding membership and officers, and the final framework and by-laws ratified in the Memorandum of Agreement in 1989.

COBEC's Origin and Early History

Post-Independence Belize: Seeds of Collaboration and Cooperation are Planted

COBEC was founded in 1988 by educational professionals from Belize and the United States (U.S.) who were involved in cooperative educational projects that began after Belize gained its independence in 1981. At that time, the Nation of Belize became eligible for educational development and training grants from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Information Agency (USIA). U.S. institutions of higher education applied for these grants and formed partnerships with Belize and Belize educational institutions. Initially, the grants and contracts were set up with the Ministry of Education, Belize

Teachers' College (BTTC) and Belize College of Arts, Science and Technology (BELCAST). Soon after those university relationships were formed, BELCAST was disbanded and the University College of Belize (UCB) was established. U.S. partnerships were then formed with UCB and other existing tertiary-level institutions. Out of these many partnerships evolved a need for coordination and cooperation among these programs.

The idea for a bi-national collaborative organization was proposed to U.S. partners by the Principal of Belize Teachers' College, Ernest Raymond, who at that time was involved in the University Affiliation grant program with Murray State University and Western Kentucky University. As a follow up to this idea, Dr. Tracy Harrington of Murray State University invited the U.S. institutions involved in University Affiliation grants or USAID programs in Belize to meet with Belizean colleagues and explore the possibility of forming a collaborative organization which would later, become COBEC.

From an Idea into Action: Exploratory Meetings are Held

The exploratory meeting was held on July 14-15, 1988, at Murray State University (MSU) in Kentucky. In addition to the host institution, representatives from four U.S. universities attended that meeting: Ferris State University (FSU), the University of North Florida (UNF), and Western Kentucky University (WKU). There were three Belizean representatives from UCB, and one from Belize Teachers' College (BTTC). Of those institutions represented, three of the original U.S. institutions remain members of COBEC. The two Belizean institutions (UCB and BTTC) have been amalgamated to form the University of Belize.

The meeting was called an "Exploratory Meeting on Organizing Cooperative Efforts for the Support of Educational Development in Belize." The meeting began with a presentation by Dr. Colville Young, president of UCB, who gave a background paper on the development of higher education in Belize. Following Dr. Young, Ernest Raymond, Principal of Belize Teachers' College, described a range of educational needs in Belize that could provide a focal point for cooperative activities in a consortium. U.S. institutions then presented an overview of the range and scope of their program activities in Belize.

General discussion of consortium philosophy followed, and the U.S. representatives felt strongly that any organization formed by the group should be one that would be "responsive to" rather than "directive of" educational initiatives in Belize. Several more basic tenets for collaboration emerged for discussion during the evening and morning sessions. Several representatives proposed that the activities should focus on Teacher Education. After further discussion, both U.S. and Belize representatives decided by consensus that the aims of the organization would include Teacher Education—but needed to be more inclusive to be able to respond to a broader range of emerging educational needs.

Importantly, this first group's interaction identified the areas of cooperative activity that should be undertaken by a consortium. Then, following discussion of these ideas, a framework for the proposed consortium was drafted. The group decided on an initial plan of action and agreed to these activities: (a) prepare and circulate a working draft of the constitution and by-laws; (b) circulate the final draft and after approval by the founding group submit that paper to the Ministry of Education (MOE) for authorization; and (c) after authorization, seek support from USAID and other funding sources.

Before adjournment, three representatives were selected as co-chairs and charged with the task of developing the constitution and by-laws and seeking its approval from the founding group. These representatives were Dr. Colville Young, Dr. Tracy Harrington and Mr. Ernest Raymond.

That proposal, framed at the initial meeting and drafted by Belize and U.S. co-chairs, was circulated, reviewed, and approved by the founding group. Significantly, that original paper formed the basis of the COBEC Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was amended, clarified, and ratified by the membership in 1989 at the first meeting of COBEC.

The Idea Takes Root: COBEC is Established

A second formative meeting of the “US/Belize Consortium of Colleges and Universities” was held on January 20, 1989, at the University of North Florida. Three members from the University of Belize attended: Dr. Colville Young, Dr. George Walker, and Joseph Fuller, along with Ernest Raymond, Principal of Belize Teachers’ College. The U.S. representatives were Dr. Tracy Harrington and Dr. Bobby Malone from MSU, Dr. John Petersen from WKU, and Drs. Betty Flinchum and Pritchey Smith from UNF.

The meeting of this bi-national group was called to finalize the “Proposal for Establishing a Formal Framework for Cooperative Efforts in Belizean Educational Development,” which was drafted by the three co-chairs. After a thorough review and significant deliberation, the proposal was renamed “A Memorandum of Agreement for Belize Educational Cooperation.” The proposal was further refined to become *A Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation* (COBEC), and its constitution and by-laws were spelled out in the *Memorandum of Agreement* (MOA). The *mission* of the consortium was described in the MOA as “*recognizing the value of international educational exchange and the benefits of collaborative efforts*” and committed the membership to “*cooperative development of educational programs and activities in Belize.*”

The aims of the organization were listed in the MOA as: (a) sharing knowledge and information relative to the development of higher education in Belize and to individual institutions in Belize; (b) collaborating in research, teaching, curriculum and library development and other appropriate scholarly activities; (c) developing mechanisms that will facilitate transfer of students; (d) promoting faculty, staff, and student exchanges; (e) supporting and encouraging staff and faculty development for Belizean, U.S., and other member institutions, (f) encouraging systematic and comprehensive planning of educational development efforts, (g) assisting in the acquisition of resources required to meet expressed needs of the higher education establishment in Belize; and (h) soliciting funds to support consortium activities.

Before adjournment, the representatives voted to approve the name and the memorandum and forward those proposals as agenda items for the first COBEC meeting. It was agreed that the name would be A Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation (COBEC) and its mission, constitution, and activities would be contained in the official Memorandum of Agreement. The MOA and the COBEC name were presented to the membership at the first COBEC meeting to be held at UCB in June of 1989. A copy of the original MOA signed by all founding members is accessible in COBEC’s archives (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/library/depts/archives-and-special-collections/finding-aids/university-archives/ua-22-7.php>).

COBEC’s early meetings focused on developing a vision and setting an agenda for action. Agendas for the earliest meetings of COBEC, between 1989 and 1990, show the solidarity and purposefulness of the organization and the growing commitment by U.S. and Belize educators to the collaboration and the many COBEC activities focused on educational development in Belize. An overview of the early meetings is in Appendix A.

The consortium has survived since its origination in 1988 and it is appropriate to salute the founders and framers for their time, insight, and thought they devoted to its establishment. Since the consortium has been in existence, 38 U.S. universities, 14 U.S. colleges, and 12 Belizean tertiary-level institutions, as well as the Belize Ministry of Education, the Belize National Library service, and Jaguar Creek Environmental Field Station have been members (Appendix B) Currently there are 64 COBEC member institutions. Additionally, the consortium has established a website (<http://cobec.org/>), hosted by Valdosta State University.

OVERARCHING METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation was structured by the works of Chen (2014) and Posavac (2015), as well as by evaluation criteria and guidelines established by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson & Caruthers, 2011). As shown in Table 1, the Kellogg Logic Model Development Guide (2004) further informed the structure of the evaluation plan, which outlined COBEC's goals, the evaluation questions, methods of data collection, and the time frame. Data collection instruments were framed by COBEC goals and subgoals (Appendix C).

Purpose and Evaluation Questions

The purposes of the evaluation study were to (a) document COBEC's outcomes and activities in Belize and the United States, (b) examine the impact of COBEC on Belizean and U.S. tertiary institutions, and (c) facilitate understanding about COBEC and its purpose, mission, and goals. The three overarching questions we addressed were:

1. To what extent has COBEC professionalized or designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities that address higher education in Belize?
2. What has been the impact of COBEC participation on U.S. and Belize institutions and the country of Belize?
3. To what extent has COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and the internationalized member institutions?

The evaluative concepts on which we focused were merit, worth, and effectiveness. We adapted Lincoln and Guba's definition of merit as that which has "value of its own, implicit, inherent, independent of any requirements of applicability" and worth as "value within some context of use or application" (1980, p. 61). Thus, we were interested in exploring the extent to which COBEC has implicit, inherent value and the extent to which it has value within the context of higher education. But we were also interested in its overall impact and effectiveness or the degree to which it was successful at professionalizing higher education in Belize, internationalizing member institutions, and the extent to which it strengthened its organizational capacity over the years.

Levels of consortium interest included individual members of COBEC, teams or committees, organizational or the consortium as a whole, and education community with Belize and the United States. The relationships we sought to examine were Belizean versus U.S. members and COBEC's founders versus new members. We defined COBEC founders as members who were involved in its early development and participated 20 or more years in its programs and activities; and new members as individuals with 19 or fewer years of involvement or experience with the consortium.

Table 1

The Evaluation Plan

COBEC Goals	Evaluation Questions	Data Collection	Time Frame
Design, develop and implement collaborative programs and activities that address higher education needs in Belize	To what extent has COBEC designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities to address Belize's higher education needs?	Interviews of key informants	Nov. 2015-Feb. 2016
		Review of historical documents; interviews	Nov. 2015 – Jan. 2016
Contribute to the internationalization of member institutions	What has been the impact of COBEC participation on US and Belize institutions and the country of Belize?	Survey – all member institutions;	Feb. – Mar., 2016
		Interviews of key informants	
Strengthen the organizational capacity of COBEC as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and internationalizing member institutions	To what extent has COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and the internationalization of member institutions?	Interviews of key informants	Nov.2015-Feb. 2016

Evaluation Design

The study is a goal-based evaluation that relied on judgment assessment to determine impact. As presented in the evaluation literature (Chen, 2015; Newcomer, Hatry, & Wholey, 2015; Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004), the use of participants' judgment to measure a program's success or impact is an appropriate evaluative strategy when conducting program evaluation, especially when "limited funds are available; when no pre-intervention measures exist; or when everyone is covered by a program and the program is uniform over places and time . . ." (Rossi et al., 2004, p. 253).

We also used the convergent mixed method design Creswell (2015) developed to structure and guide the evaluation process. As shown in Figure 1, the convergent design guides the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, analyze the two data sets separately, merge results for comparison, and then interpret the data with and through convergent and divergent lenses. According to Guetterman, Creswell, and Kuckartz (2015), "Data analysis in this design occurs at three distinct points in one phase of the research: with each dataset independently, when the comparison or transformation of the data occurs, and after comparison or transformation is completed" (p. 152). The evaluators adhered to the design process and collected survey and interview data simultaneously, analyzed the data sets separately, and, as shown in the analysis section of this report, merged and integrated the results.

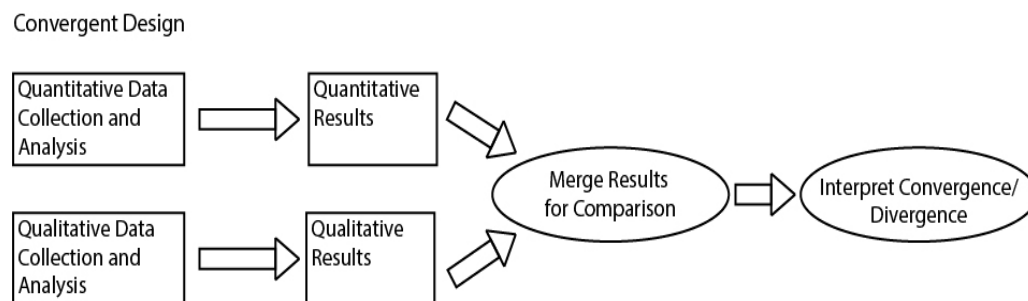


Figure 1. Creswell's Convergent Design

We believe the design and methods used throughout the study benefited from our adherence to relevant evaluation standards presented in the third edition of the *Program Evaluation Standards* published by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Yarbrough, et. al, 2011). Consequently, and without listing and explaining all 30 standards (seven standards in the *utility domain*, three in the *feasibility domain*, eight in *propriety domain*, and 12 in *accuracy domain*), we followed and observed both the spirit and letter of each standard. For example, for Utility Standard U1 we carefully described the perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings "so that the bases for value judgments are clear." For Feasibility Standard F1, and to keep the disruption to a minimum while we collected the survey and interview data, we kept the "evaluation procedure as practical as possible." For Propriety Standard P3, we followed the informed consent guidelines and protected the rights and welfare of participants by obtaining approval to conduct the study from the University of North Florida and University of Florida Institutional Review Boards. Moreover, for Accuracy Standard A1, we focused on describing and documenting COBEC's programs and activities accurately so that the consortium was clearly identified.

Summary of Part One

Part One of the study covered the introduction and background and discussed COBEC's origin, history, and purpose. Part One also addressed the overarching methodology used to conduct the study and described the evaluation plan, purpose and questions, and the design. Part Two will focus on the quantitative design, methodology, and results; Part Three on the economic impact of COBEC on Belize; Part Four on the qualitative design, methodology, and results; Part Five on merging results and interpreting convergence and divergence; and Part Six on conclusions and recommendations.

PART TWO

QUANTITATIVE DESIGN, METHODOLOGY, AND RESULTS

Design and Methodology

We employed a survey design and collected data that described COBEC members' views and beliefs about the consortium's impact on its member institutions (tertiary) in Belize and the United States. The methodological procedures include a description of the survey instrument, discussion of the participants and their demographics, explanation of the data collection process, an explanation of how the data were managed and treated, and a description of the data analysis procedures. Each procedure is addressed in the following sections.

Instrumentation and Participants

We developed the questionnaire shown in Appendix D. COBEC's three overarching goals and their subgoals (<http://archives.valdosta.edu/cobec/goals.php>) framed and guided the development of the instrument. At COBEC meeting in February 2015, eight COBEC members reviewed the instrument using Litwin's (1995) *Instrument Evaluation Checklist*. Based on their comments and suggestions, we revised six items and deleted five. The validation process resulted in the same number of sections but fewer items. In short, the final version of the questionnaire has six sections, five of which contained Likert-type items, and the sixth has five open-ended questions.

The survey was sent to all 70 COBEC members, of which 25 (36%) were Belize members and 45 (64%) were US members (Table 2). Thirty-six (51%) members responded, of which 23 (33%) were females and 13 (36%) were males. Years of membership in COBEC ranged from less than eight years (40%) to more than 16 years (13%), and participants' age ranged between 25 and 45 (25%) and more than 66 (14%). The table also shows institutional affiliation of those who responded to the demographic questions. Five (18%) of the Belizean members indicated institutional affiliation, whereas (23 or 82%) U.S. members responded to this item.

Data Collection

Following the validation process, we sent an email message with instructions, the consent form, and the electronic link to the questionnaire to 70 COBEC members via Qualtrics, Version 2016 (Qualtrics, Provo, UT). We gave participants two weeks to complete the instrument, and, thereafter, COBEC's co-chairs sent email reminders to participants during March, April, and May of 2016, encouraging them to complete the questionnaire. Their follow-up reminders resulted in a 51% response rate, as depicted in Table 2.

Data Management and Treatment

We managed the data with Qualtrics, Version 2016 (Qualtrics, Provo, UT) a survey software program. The management procedures involved data checking, data reduction, and data cleaning (Creswell, 2015; Kantardzic, 2011). We completed all three procedures before analyzing the data. Data checking revealed that while 41 individuals attempted the survey, only 36 completed it. We addressed nonresponse bias by extrapolating the characteristics of nonresponders (e.g.,

educators, Belizeans and non-Belizeans, membership and interest in COBEC) and comparing them to the characteristics of responders. Because the two groups were similar, we did not use wave analysis, follow-up analysis, benchmarking, or other procedures (Creswell, 2015; Halbesleben & Whitman, 2013) to determine the presence or absence of nonresponse bias.

Table 2

Number, Percent & Characteristics of Survey Participants

Respondent groups	Sent	Returned	% Returned
Belizean COBEC members	25	11	44%
U.S. COBEC members	45	25	56%
Total	70	36	51%
Gender of respondents (n=36)			
	23 (64%)=F	13 (36%)=M	
Years of membership (n=30)			
	8yrs<=12 (40%)	9-16yrs=14 (47%)	>16=4 (13%)
Age (n=36)			
	25-45=9 (25%)	46-55=9 (25%)	56-65=12 (33%) >66=6 (17%)
Institutional Affiliation (n=28)			
• BZ 4yr College/Univ.	4 (14%)		
• BZ CC/Technical inst.	1 (4%)		
• U.S. 4-yr. College/Univ.	19 (68%)		
• U.S. CC/Technical inst.	4 (14%)		

Data Analysis

We analyzed the survey data (ordinal) with descriptive statistics, which included the mode or most frequent response (Allen & Seaman, 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Additionally, we used constant comparative analysis to examine survey participants' responses to the open-ended questions on the survey. We also used constant comparative analysis to examine commonalities and differences between the beliefs and views of Belize and U.S. participants (Krippendoff, 2013; Schreier, 2014).

RESULTS

This evaluation study investigated COBEC's merit and worth by investigating the extent to which the consortium is achieving its purpose and mission through various programs and activities.

Question 1: To what extent has COBEC designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities to address Belize's higher education needs?

The survey data that address this question were collected in Section 2 of the questionnaire. Fourteen items asked participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with whether COBEC has developed and implemented collaborative programs and activities that professionalized or addressed higher education needs in Belize. Table 3 shows the findings for respondents' level of agreement and disagreement with each item, and Figure 2 shows the distribution from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Importantly, Column 5 of the table shows the combined percentages of Columns 2 (Strongly Agree); 3 (Agree) and 4 (Somewhat Agree). The combined responses in these three columns account for respondents who indicated some degree of agreement.

Findings in the table show that for all 14 items, respondents indicated various levels of agreement, disagreement, and indecision. The items with the highest combined percentages of agreement were implementing professional development programs (100%), providing advanced degree training for individual faculty, staff, and administrators (83%), strengthening collaboration among COBEC institutions (82%), and participating in the development of quality assurance initiatives for Belizean institutions (73) %. Conversely, the three items with the lowest combined percentages were assessing the impact of scholarship support by non-Belize institutions (31%), organizing a clearinghouse for donations (29%), and pursuing an active research agenda (24%).

Table 3

*Participant's level of agreement regarding COBEC's collaborative programs and activities**

Item	SA	A	AS	CP**	U	DS	D	SD	n
COBEC has implemented short-term programs that target specific professional development needs of higher education faculty, staff, and administrators.	12 (34%)	16 (46%)	7 (20%)	100 %	0	0	0	0	35
COBEC has provided advanced degree training for individual faculty, staff, and administrators from Bz. institutions.	9 (26)	13 (37)	7 (20)	83%	5 (14)	0	1 (3)	0	35
COBEC has addressed institutional resource needs related to technology, libraries, and laboratories.	6 (18)	12 (35)	7 (21)	74%	7 (21)	0	1 (3)	1 (3)	34
COBEC has addressed curriculum development needs of all COBEC institutions, including programs such as internationalizing the curriculum and area studies.	3 (9)	10 (29)	12 (35)	74%	6 (18)	2 (6)	1 (3)	0	34
COBEC has developed programs that address student needs related to academic advisement and student support services.	2 (6)	7 (20)	13 (37)	63%	11 (31)	1 (3)	1 (3)	0	35

Table 3 (continued)

Item	SA	A	AS	CP**	U	DS	D	SD	n
COBEC has organized a clearinghouse for donations of equipment and educational materials to Bz. institutions.	1 (3)	5 (14)	10 (29)	46%	9 (25)	7 (20)	3 (9)	0	35
COBEC has participated in the development of quality assurance initiatives for Bz. institutions	2 (6)	15 (43)	8 (23)	73%	6 (17)	1 (3)	3 (9)	0	35
COBEC has broadened the base of Bz. institutions engaged in COBEC-sponsored activities.	5 (15)	15 (45)	3 (9)	70%	7 (21)	1 (3)	2 (6)	0	33
COBEC has pursued active research agendas involving Bz. and non-Bz. faculty, administrators, and students.	2 (5)	4 (12)	8 (26)	43%	12 (35)	5 (15)	2 (6)	1 (3)	34
COBEC has worked with ATLIB to conduct needs assessment.	2 (6)	12 (34)	6 (17)	57%	12 (34)	3 (9)	0	0	35
COBEC has strengthened collaboration among all COBEC institutions.	5 (14)	19 (54)	5 (14)	82%	2 (6)	2 (6)	1 (3)	1 (3)	35
COBEC has assisted Bz. institutions in meeting accreditation criteria.	2 (6)	8 (24)	8 (24)	53%	10 (29)	1 (3)	4 (12)	1 (3)	34
COBEC has facilitated forging of articulation agreements between Bz. and non-Bz. member institutions.	8 (23)	11 (32)	9 (26)	81%	4 (11)	2 (6)	1 (3)	0	35
COBEC has formally assessed the impact of scholarship support by non-Bz. institutions on the achievement of staff development goals of Bz. institutions.	2 (6)	3 (9)	4 (11)	26%	15 (43)	4 (11)	7 (20)	0	35
TOTALS	61 (13)	150 (31)	107 (22)	66%	106 (22)	29 (6)	27 (5)	4 (1)	48

*SA--Strongly Agree; A--Agree; AS--Agree Somewhat; U--Undecided; DS--Disagree Somewhat; D--Strongly Disagree; **CP--Combined percentages from Columns 2, 3, and 4

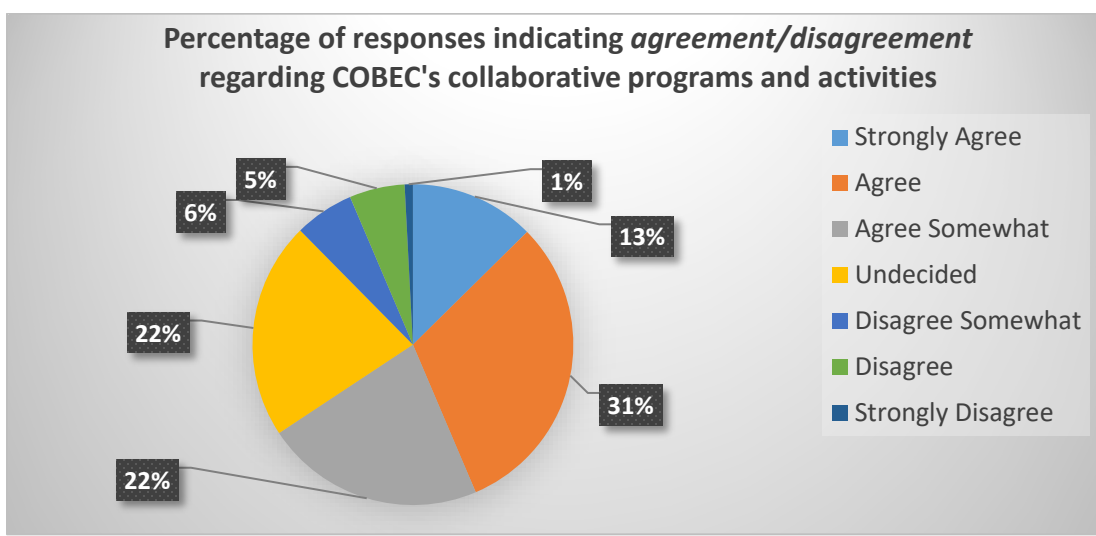


Figure 2. Agreement with COBEC's collaborative programs and activities

Question 2: To what extent has COBEC contributed to the internationalization of member institutions?

The survey data that address this question were collected in Section 3 of the questionnaire. Four items asked participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement regarding COBEC's contributions to the internationalization of member institutions. Table 4 shows the findings for their level of agreement and disagreement, and Figure 3 shows the distribution from *strongly agree to strongly disagree*. Importantly, Column 5 of the table shows the combined percentages of Columns 2 (Strongly Agree); 3 (Agree) and 4 (Somewhat Agree). The combined responses in these three columns account for respondents who indicated some degree of agreement.

The table shows that the items on which they expressed the strongest agreement or the items with the largest combined percentages of agreement were COBEC's academic exchange programs (79%), COBEC's organization of study abroad and other opportunities for students (77%), and identification of sources of financial aid for Belizean students (69%). However, note that these three percentages are relatively small when compared to the percentages documented in Question 1, which suggest that respondents believed COBEC has done more to professionalize higher education in Belize than it has to internationalize higher education among member institutions. Note also the relatively large percentage (43%) of participants in Table 4 who were indecisive or undecided about the development of curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions. This result suggests respondents were either not directly involved in or were uninformed about COBEC's curricular work with non-Belizean institutions.

Table 4

Participant's level of agreement regarding COBEC's contributions to the internationalization of member institutions*

Item	SA	A	AS	CP**	U	DS	D	SD	n
COBEC has developed programs and processes to increase the number and effectiveness of academic exchange of students, faculty, and staff of COBEC member institutions.	5 (14%)	11 (31%)	12 (34%)	79%	5 (14%)	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	35
COBEC has identified and developed sources of financial aid for Bz. students studying at non-Bz. member institutions.	5 (14)	10 (29)	9 (26)	69%	7 (20)	3 (9)	0	1 (3)	35
COBEC has organized study abroad programs, service learning opportunities, and internship experiences for students from both Bz. and non-Bz. member institutions.	8 (23)	7 (20)	12 (34)	77%	7 (20)	1 (3)	0	0	35

Table 4 (continued)

Item	SA	A	AS	CP**	U	DS	D	SD	n
COBEC has developed curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Bz. institutions on aspects of Belizean culture, history, and society, using professional resources available through Bz. member institutions.	2 (6)	6 (17)	7 (20)	43%	15 (43)	4 (11)	0	1 (3)	35
TOTAL	20 (14)	34 (24)	40 (29)	67%	32 (23)	8 (6)	1 (1)	3 (3)	140

*SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; AS-Agree Somewhat; U-Undecided; DS- Disagree Somewhat; SD- Strongly Disagree

**CP--Combined percentages from Columns 2, 3, and 4.

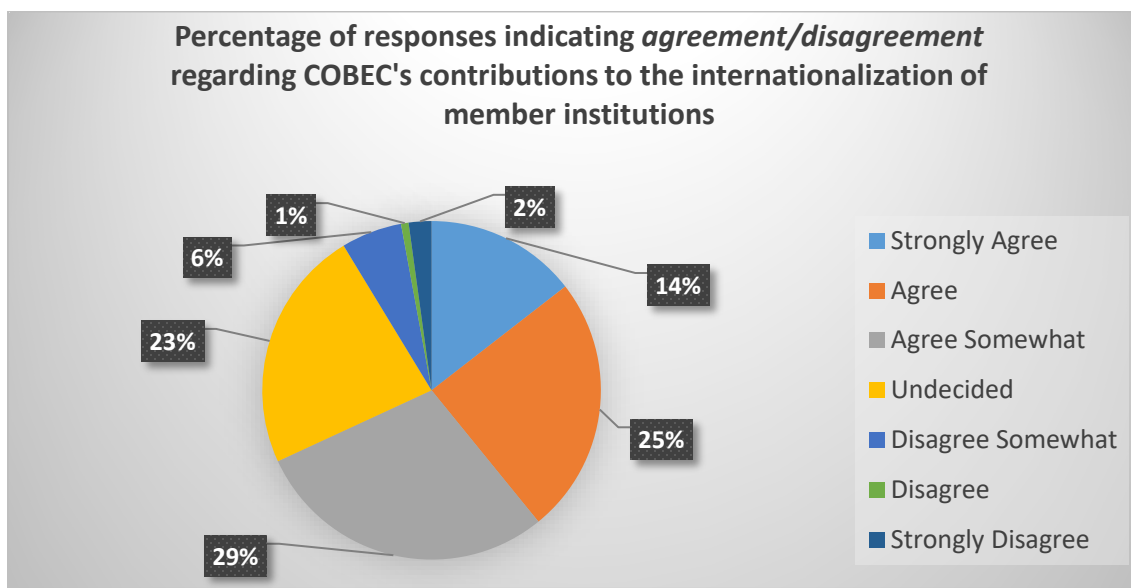


Figure 3. Agreement with COBEC’s contributions to the internationalization of member institutions

Question 3: To what extent has COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and internationalized member institutions?

The survey data that address this question were collected in Section 4 of the questionnaire. Eight items in Section 4 asked participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement regarding COBEC’s organizational capacity to meet needs in Belize and COBEC member institutions. Table 5 shows their level of agreement and disagreement for each statement, and Figure 4 shows the distribution from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Importantly, Column 5 of the table shows the combined percentages of Columns 2 (Strongly Agree); 3 (Agree) and 4 (Somewhat Agree). The combined responses in these three columns account for respondents who

indicated some degree of agreement. The table shows that the two items with the highest combined percentages of agreement were established and maintained a program for archiving materials (79%) and developed effective communication and marketing tools (74%). The three items on which they registered the least agreement and most indecision were initiated a center or institute (20%), created a COBEC secretariat (31%), and designed and implemented a strategy for obtaining grant funding (43%).

Table 5

Participants' level of agreement regarding COBEC's organizational capacity to meet needs in Belize and COBEC's member institutions*

Item	SA	A	AS	CP**	U	DS	D	SD	n
COBEC has designed and implemented a strategy for obtaining grant funding to support COBEC projects in Belize.	2 (6%)	7 (20%)	6 (17%)	43%	10 (29%)	4 (11%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	35
COBEC has achieved a wider geographic and national representation among non-Belizean members.	3 (6)	7 (20)	13 (37)	63%	6 (17)	2 (6)	4 (11)	0	35
COBEC has increased the number of two-year institutions among the non-Belizean membership.	6 (17)	10 (29)	4 (11)	57%	10 (29)	3 (9)	1 (3)	1 (3)	35
COBEC has developed effective communication and marketing tools, including a website and brochure, to increase the visibility of COBEC among tertiary-level institutions and interested constituencies beyond the COBEC membership.	7 (20)	7 (20)	12 (34)	74%	4 (11)	3 (9)	2 (6)	0	35
COBEC has created a COBEC secretariat to provide administrative support for COBEC activities.	2 (6)	5 (14)	4 (11)	31%	11 (32)	2 (6)	7 (20)	4 (11)	35
COBEC has initiated a center or institute to serve as a facilitating entity for COBEC activities.	2 (6)	3 (9)	2 (6)	20%	12 (34)	1 (3)	11 (33)	2 (6)	33
COBEC has established and maintained a program for archiving COBEC materials.	7 (20)	15 (44)	5 (15)	79%	6 (18)	0	1 (3)	0	34
COBEC has generated additional interest and investment in COBEC in Belize and within each non-Belizean institution	4 (12)	9 (26)	6 (19)	57%	11 (32)	2 (6)	2 (6)	0	34
TOTALS	33 (12)	63 (23)	52 (19)	54%	70 (25)	17 (6)	31 (11)	10 (4)	27 6

*SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; AS-Agree Somewhat; U-Undecided; DS- Disagree Somewhat; SD- Strongly Disagree

**CP--Combined percentages from Columns 2, 3, and 4.

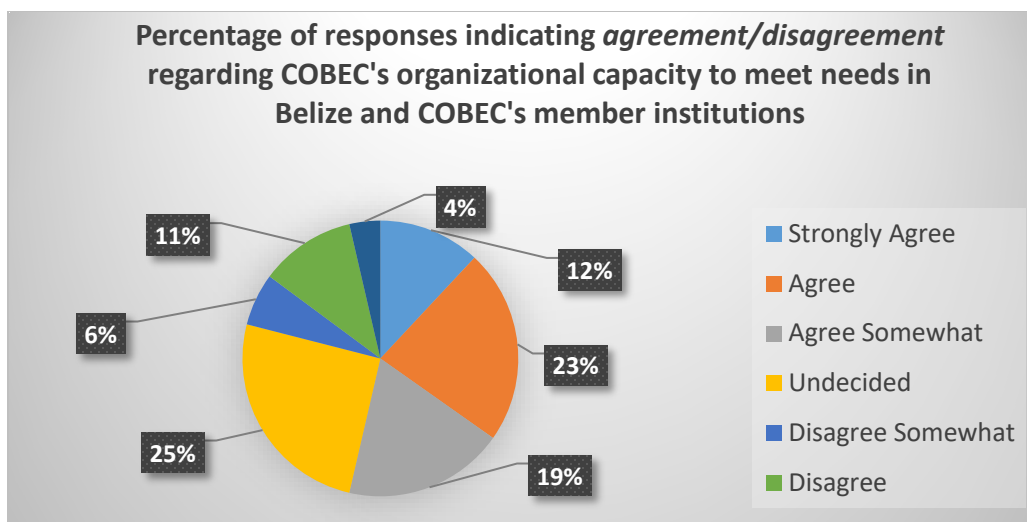


Figure 4. Agreement regarding COBEC’s organizational capacity to meet needs in Belize and COBEC’s member institutions

Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with various aspects of COBEC

Additional data that addressed COBEC’s contribution to strengthening its organizational capacity were collected in Section 1 of the questionnaire. The nine items asked participants to indicate their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various aspects of COBEC. Respondents also had an opportunity to make comments about any of the statements if they chose to do so. Table 6 shows the findings for respondents’ level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Importantly, Column 4 shows the combined percentages of Column 2 (Very Satisfied) and Column 3 (Satisfied).

Findings in the table show that for all nine items, the majority of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied. The five items with the highest combined percentage of satisfaction (VS and S) were COBEC’s mission (92%), summer and winter conferences (89%), quality of programs and activities (89%), clarity and realistic nature of COBEC’s purpose (89%) and goals (86%). While attracting a majority of participants, the two items with the lowest level of combined satisfaction were orientation to COBEC (66%) and effectiveness of the standing committees (67%).

Table 6

Participants’ level of satisfaction with various aspects of COBEC*

Item	VS %	S	CP**	NO	D	VD	NA	N
Information about COBEC before I joined	8 (22%)	16 (44%)	66%	5 (14%)	3 (8%)	0	4 (11%)	36

Table 6 (continued)

Item	VS %	S	CP**	NO	D	VD	NA	N
Orientation to COBEC	7 (19)	19 (53)	72%	5 (14)	4 (11)	0	1 (3)	36
Quality of the summer and winter conferences	12 (33)	20 (56)	89%	2 (6)	2 (6)	0	0	36
Quality of the programs and activities	8 (23)	23 (66)	89%	2 (6)	2 (6)	0	0	35
Effectiveness of the standing committees	5 (14)	19 (53)	67%	8 (25)	4 (11)	0	0	36
Clarity and realistic nature of COBEC's purpose	6 (17)	26 (72)	89%	2 (6)	2 (6)	0	0	36
Clarity and realistic nature of COBEC's mission	11 (31)	22 (61)	92%	1 (3)	2 (6)	0	0	35
Clarity and realistic nature of COBEC's goals	6 (17)	25 (69)	86%	4 (11)	1 (3)	0	0	36
Clarity and functionality of the bylaws	6 (17)	22 (61)	78%	7 (19)	0	1 (3)	1 (3)	37
TOTALS	69 (21%)	192 (59%)	81%	36 (11%)	20 (6%)	1 (1%)	6 (2%)	324

*VS-Very satisfied; S-Satisfied; NO-Have No Opinion; D-Dissatisfied; VD- Very Dissatisfied; NA- Not Applicable
 **CP=Combined percentages of Columns 2 and 3

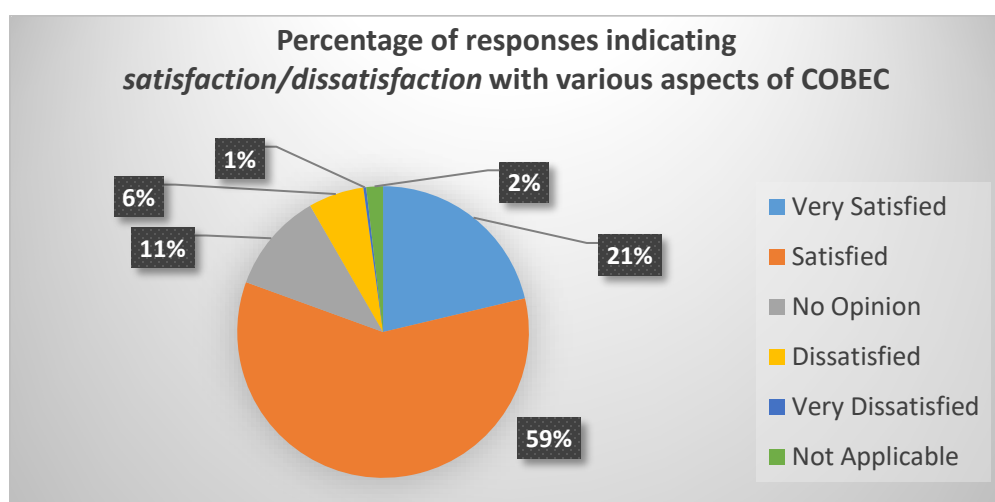


Figure 5. Participants' level of satisfaction with various aspects of COBEC

Some participants added comments about the items in this section. Most comments were about the summer and winter meetings. Comments by two respondents represent the group's sentiments. Concerning the quality of the summer and winter conferences, one respondent commented that "It often appears as though professional development opportunities are haphazardly thrown together." Regarding the standing committees, another respondent stated that "It appears that there is not much interaction that occurs between the meetings and the time allowed at the conference for the standing committees never seems sufficient." Another said that "CAFE and College Fair committees seem to be very effective. Study abroad seems to go in circles, revisiting the same topics at each meeting. However, I think that the Study Abroad Committee does serve as a good exchange for ideas."

Impact on Entities in Belize and the United States

We also asked respondents to indicate their beliefs about COBEC's impact on eight entities in Belize and the United States. Their task was to compare and contrast. The items ranged from education in general to study abroad programs. Table 7 shows the findings of how they rated their beliefs about COBEC's impact on each entity.

The majority of respondents believed strongly or somewhat strongly that in Belize COBEC impacted collaboration between Belize and U.S. institutions (91%), education in general (82%), study abroad programs (72%), and graduate education (72%). In contrast, respondents believed strongly or somewhat strongly that in the U.S. COBEC impacted collaboration (93%), study abroad (85%), and faculty exchanges (57%). In other words, while the majority of respondents rated collaboration as the major area of impact in both Belize (91%) and the U.S. (93%), they diverged significantly in how they viewed COBEC's impact on education (BZ = 82%; U.S.=47%) and study abroad programs (Bz. =72%; U.S.=85%).

Table 7

Participant's level of agreement regarding COBEC's impact on specific entities in Belize and the U.S.*

Item	Belize							USA						
	SI	SWI	CP**	NS	LDNI	DDNI	N	SI	SWI	CP***	NS	LDNI	DDNI	N
Education	18 (53%)	10 (29%)	82%	5 (15%)	1 (3%)	0	3 4	3 (11%)	10 (36%)	47%	11 (39%)	3 (11%)	1 (3%)	28
Dual Deg.	2 (6)	9 (27)	33%	19 (58)	2 (6)	1 (3)	3 3	1 (4)	4 (14)	18%	18 (64)	3 (11)	2 (7)	28
Faculty Xchanges	4 (12)	14 (41)	53%	13 (38)	2 (6)	1 (3)	3 4	3 (11)	13 (46)	57%	9 (32)	0	3 (11)	28

Table 7 (continued)

Item	Belize							USA						
	SI	SWI	CP**	NS	LDNI	DDNI	N	SI	SWI	CP***	NS	LDNI	DDNI	N
Collab'n Bz/US Instit'ns	17 (50)	14 (41)	91%	3 (9)	0	0	3 4	14 (50)	12 (43)	93%	2 (7)	0	0	28
Graduate Education	10 (29)	14 (41)	70%	9 (27)	0	1 (3)	3 4	3 (11)	8 (28)	39%	13 (46)	3 (11)	1 (4)	28
Internships	5 (15)	9 (26)	41%	14 (41)	4 (12)	2 (6)	3 4	4 (17)	8 (28)	45%	13 (46)	1 (3)	2 (6)	28
Public'n's	1 (3)	5 (15)	18%	21 (64)	4 (12)	2 (6)	3 3	0 (64)	6 (21)	21%	17 (61)	2 (7)	3 (11)	28
Study Abrd. Programs	14 (42)	10 (30)	72%	7 (21)	0	2 (6)	3 3	18 (64)	6 (21)	85%	2 (7)	2 (7)	0	28
TOTALS	71 (26)	85 (31)	58%	91 (34)	13 (5)	9 (3)		46 (21)	67 (30)	51%	85 (38)	14 (6)	12 (5)	

* Strongly Impacted (SI), Somewhat Impacted (SWI), Not Sure (NS), Likely Did Not Impact (LDNI), Definitely Did Not Impact (DDNI) **CP--Combined percentages from Columns 2 and 3 ***CP--Combined percentages from Columns 9 and 10

Additionally, while a minority of respondents believed publications was the area least impacted in both Belize (18%) and the U.S. (18%), they believed that internships in Belize (18%) and dual degree programs in the U.S. (18%) were the next two areas least impacted.

Responses to Open-ended Questions

This section presents a summary of participants' responses to five open-ended questions. To compare similarities and dissimilarities of responses, the responses from Belizean participants and U.S. participants were examined separately and then together. The questions were:

1. What were the major reasons you joined COBEC?
2. What information about COBEC you wished you knew before you joined?
3. What were (or are) the most positive aspects of COBEC for you?
4. What were (or are) the most negative aspects of COBEC for you?
5. What would you change about COBEC?

Question 1: What were the major reasons you joined COBEC?

Nine Belizean participants and 20 U.S. members responded to this question. With regard to the major reasons for joining COBEC, nine Belizean participants described the major reasons for joining the consortium:

- To be able to tap into “the range of expertise available in COBEC”
- “To be informed on current tertiary affairs and trends”
- To engage in “collaboration among faculty in research and other areas
- The enhancement of “the quality of services to students and faculty”
- To “gain knowledge about how improvement can be made as it pertains to institution, faculty, and students”
- Access to “information and resources”

In addition to expertise, information and collaborations gained through involvement in COBEC, respondents believed the consortium provided opportunities for

- “further studies for students and faculty,”
- “Belizean students to study abroad through scholarships and other financial assistance.”

One participant benefited “from tuition waivers, scholarships and developed a network among scholars.”

Consortium members from the United States highlighted opportunities for networking; experiencing a different culture, and opportunities for their students. Their comments included:

- Participate in “my profession in a different culture”
- “Leverage opportunities; exposure for students”
- Participate in “networking opportunities with others working in the region”
- Establish “positive connections in Belize for developing and expanding short term study abroad programs”

Some U.S. partners had long-standing relationships with Belize. One said his institution was “a founding member of COBEC.” A few of the other U.S. partners, having visited Belize, felt the desire to join the consortium to strengthen “long term study abroad collaborations.” One institution had already established “a 10-year study abroad program;” another was “already a long-time member,” and another already “had partnership agreements with institutions in Belize.” For those institutions with long-standing relationships in Belize, it made sense to join the consortium.

For a few other participants, previous positive experiences in Belize led to a desire to join the consortium. One was “invited by a colleague to go and present” [in Belize]; another had the opportunity to “present CAFE workshops and a positive experience led me to desire more involvement with COBEC”; another was “assigned to participate on the College fair,” and after that started attending the conferences.

A few other reasons for joining focused on COBEC’s establishment. One member joined because she believes in “COBEC’s mission, goals, and objectives,” another “to be actively involved in an organization involving interested U.S. and non-U.S. institutions” and another because the consortium seemed “to have a purpose and a proven history of collaboration between

Belizean and U.S. colleges.” Joining the consortium was beneficial not only for the U.S., but also the Belize institutions and allowed for the establishment of “mutually beneficial relationships with sister Belizean institutions.”

In summary, as one participant shared, being a consortium member was important not only because of the benefits gained “from the broader thinking of colleague institutions about the work in Belize,” learning about the “two-year system in another country,” and develop[ment] of a wider circle of Belizean colleagues,” but also to further “the educational needs of the country” and to be “able to make contributions to Belizean institutions.”

Question 2: What information about COBEC you wished you knew before you joined?

For this question, there were seven responses from Belizean members and 14 from U.S. participants.

For the Belizean respondents, three responded N/A and others would have wanted more information about “the U.S. institutions, their programs, their interests in Belize and areas in which they would like to collaborate,” how to select partners for collaboration, scholarship information, and the “dollar value of scholarship...”

For U.S. members, eight had all the information they needed before joining, and others would have liked more information on the:

- country, state of the archives and the libraries
- MOU that their institution had signed with the Ministry of Education
- organizational structure of COBEC and what is ATLIB
- past performance; benchmark achievements; list of Belizean contacts who support COBEC efforts in the country
- levels of member commitment to implement COBEC’s vision, mission, and goals

Question 3: What were (or are) the most positive aspects of COBEC for you?

Nine Belizean members and 17 U.S. participants responded to this question. Belizean members mentioned

(a) Access to information/expertise/professional development

- the exposure to cutting edge issues in education, technology, and information resources
- professional development opportunities
- the CAFE workshops have also afforded the Belizean tertiary institutions the opportunity to keep abreast of current developments in higher education
- professional development of faculty and administrators of Belizean COBEC institutions

(b) Opportunities to collaborate/build relationships

- February and Summer meetings and access to colleagues, information, support, and exchange programs
- opportunities at the bi-annual conferences for cultural exchange in Belize and abroad

(c) Opportunities/partnerships that support Belizeans' pursuit of higher education abroad

- partnerships that led to student scholarships, faculty exchanges, study abroad and service learning opportunities, and getting to know people whose "heart is shaped like the outline of Belize"
- willingness to support the needs highlighted by the Ministry of Education, opportunities afforded Belizeans to study at COBEC institutions in the U.S.
- opportunities for further studies at U.S. institutions and return to Belize to contribute to the growth and development of the education sector
- COBEC has opened access through the tuition waivers that the US institutions have offered Belizean students
- COBEC U.S. institutions and Belize institutions have also collaborated in study abroad programs that offer U.S. students opportunities to broaden their experiences
- access to tertiary education

U.S. members highlighted relationships and collaboration among consortium members that impacted both Belize and U.S. partners. Some of the representative observations noted that:

"The ability to collaborate with and jointly work on educational issues for the betterment of global education. Working with my Belizean colleagues who have become dear friends as we work together to address important issues in education . . . both in the U.S. and Belize."

"The collaboration and warm personal and professional friendships are *very rewarding*, and the idea of working together to improve education in both the U.S. and Belize is professionally satisfying."

"The relationships forged between individuals. Learning more about the good work and dedication of Belizean colleagues."

"The exposure our institution has in Belize, and the financial opportunities we offer to students from Belize to come study in the U.S."

Question 4: What were (or are) the most negative aspects of COBEC for you?

Eight Belizean members and 13 U.S. participants responded to this question. For two of the Belizean members, there were no negative aspects of the consortium, and the others mentioned areas on which the consortium might work. These included improvements concerning the conferences, such as

“providing a substantive meeting agenda in a timely fashion”

“The annual meetings are short and not very focused on planned annual goals... the discussion should be on the achievement of annual and long-term strategic goals and on planning the way forward.”

“more time to get enough information and discuss best practices”

About collaborations and the work of the consortium, suggestions included:

“Increase funds to do more.”

“More pro-active, timely and multi-lateral collaborations for specific and critical needs in Belize to be sought and committed to by some Belizean COBEC institutions in order to capitalize on the resources and opportunities available and offered by COBEC institutions in the U.S.; also, more active participation of the part of some COBEC institutions in the U.S.”

“Consistent review and recalibration of clear achievable goals/objectives”

“The need for a secretariat to keep records and to monitor the achievement of the association's purpose and goals.”

While two US participants mentioned no negative issues about COBEC, eleven made the following observations:

Five participants made comments regarding the conferences, noting that “it's expensive to attend both meetings per year.” Also, that “sometimes the programs are so broad as to be meaningless for different professions,” and that “many U.S. institutions don't attend the U.S. summer conference.” Additionally, “the meetings can become tedious, particularly when there are many presentations” and “the presentations could be more helpful.”

Regarding the work of the consortium, it was noted that:

“There is a lack of resources”; “Things move along slowly and the level of commitment does not seem to be there sometimes.”

“Many ideas are discussed, but quite a few of them seem to never develop beyond the conversation level”

“There is a need for funding for students who wish to travel abroad”

“There is a lack of in-between collaboration between our U.S. summer meeting and the Belizean winter meeting. This is partly due to the fact that we often times have different people attending at different times, and these attendees are not up to speed on what COBEC has been doing”

Question 5: What would you change about COBEC?

Seven Belizean members and 15 U.S. participants responded to this question. Of the Belizean respondents, two members said they would change nothing or “not much” or just continuing the “good work.” Other participants made suggestions on how to achieve the mission and purpose, how to improve strategic planning, and how to increase student participation. Their suggestions included:

“A website that is up-to-date and a place to go for accurate information”

“Do a better job defining what we see as the value proposition of the organization . . . demonstrating the value-added for members . . . and achieving our objectives . . . we should be able to charge a higher membership fee and do even more to support the pursuit of our mission.”

“Make clear our purpose and that we develop strategic plans and work toward the achievement of goals.” “[Improve/increase] level of information sharing - documentation.” “[Improve/increase] availability of information to prospective students.”

Of the 15 U.S. members who responded, 13 made the following suggestions to improve COBEC:

(a) Concerning the meetings:

“Perhaps the winter meetings could be a bit longer, allowing for more social and professional collaboration.”

“The topics at the conferences could be more scholarly and more helpful in teaching us how to [implement] initiatives in Belize.”

(b) Concerning the work and structure of the consortium with a focus on self-evaluation, increasing collaborations and opportunities, and increasing efficiency of the organization, suggestions included:

“I would use the results from this study to clarify COBEC's vision, mission, and goals; restructure the organization's administrative and managerial functions; and identify two or three substantive initiatives that clearly address the needs of institutions in Belize and the U.S.”

“I would like to see a designated secretariat, perhaps with a paid honorarium, to assist the Co-Chairs in the planning of biannual meetings. This person could be responsible for helping to coordinate the conferences and workshop to take place at each meeting and possibly arrange for special guest or keynote speakers. I would also like to see a core of members from partner institutions (one from each institution and the voting member) that would collaborate on matters requiring a vote. By just taking a majority vote of those in attendance when business is being conducted allows for a biased

approach in the outcome. One institution could have a number of persons present each voting on the same issue. There should be only one vote per institution.”

“More evaluation of ourselves and where we are heading, which is what this study will be doing, but on an ongoing basis, at the COBEC meetings, perhaps to have more discussions about how we are doing as a consortium and how we can be on a path to continuous improvement. More research collaborations between committed Belizean and U.S. faculty members. COBEC should develop a research thrust that will generate data to improve education in Belize. Identification of research needs by our Belizean colleagues and commitment to knowledge generation and dissemination.”

“More grant funding from outside sources to [conduct] programs in Belize. Maybe a clearinghouse for granting organizations to help us apply. I'm afraid we'll put too much pressure on the budget if we get too active without searching for more funding.”

“Create more opportunities for Belizeans and U.S. Americans to learn collaboratively.”

“I would like to see more focus on specific actionable items that advance education for students in both countries.”

(c) As far as data collection:

“develop a repository for economic and entrepreneurship data and expand the number of members outside Belize and the U.S.”

Summary of Part Two

Part Two of the study focused on details of the survey methodology and presented the findings in tables and charts. The survey was completed by 51% of the COBEC members. Responses indicated similarities as well as differences in perspectives among U.S. and Belizean respondents.

Several findings are notable. In their responses to Question 1 about the extent to which COBEC designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities to address Belize's higher education needs, all participants agreed that the consortium was highly successful in implementing professional development, and a plurality believed COBEC provided advanced degree training and strengthened collaborations among member institutions. However, they believed COBEC has not organized a clearinghouse for donations, needs to pursue active research agendas, and formally assess the impact of scholarship support.

Responses that addressed Question 2 focused on the extent to which has COBEC contributed to the internationalization of member institutions. The majority of participants agreed that exchange programs and study abroad activities were among COBEC's accomplishment that contributed to the internationalization of member institutions. However, the findings indicate that COBEC needs to do more to develop curricular and co-curricular programs and activities.

In their responses that address Question 3 about the extent to which COBEC has worked at strengthening its organizational capacity, combined percentages indicate that a majority of respondents believed COBEC has established and maintained a program for archiving COBEC materials and has developed effective communication and marketing tools. Respondents also expressed strong levels of satisfaction with COBEC's mission, purpose, goals, and the winter conferences. However—and as most of the relatively low combined percentages show—participants believed COBEC has much work to do in strengthening its organizational capacity, especially with regards to creating a COBEC secretariat, initiating a center to facilitate its activities, distributing information to prospective members, and improving the effectiveness of standing committees.

Concerning COBEC's impact on specific entities in Belize and the US, a significant percentage of respondents agreed COBEC strongly or somewhat strongly impacted study abroad activities and collaboration between Belize and U.S. institutions. Conversely, only a relatively small percentage of participants believed COBEC impacted dual degree programs, internships, and publications in both Belize and the U.S. Significantly more respondents believed COBEC strongly or somewhat strongly impacted education in general and graduate education in particular in Belize, as opposed to the U.S., where significantly fewer respondents believed COBEC impacted higher education in both countries.

The open-ended responses supported the survey findings in explaining the benefits of COBEC membership. Responses also suggested ways to advance the effectiveness of the consortium and improve the conferences.

Part Three of the evaluation will address COBEC's economic impact on Belize, and, consistent with the mixed method design, Part Four will focus on the qualitative design, methodology, and results. Part Five will focus on merging and interpreting results from Parts Two, Three and Four. Part Six will address conclusions and recommendations.

PART THREE

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Document Review And Economic Impact Analysis

COBEC’s published and unpublished documents archived at the library at Valdosta State University and the University of North Florida were content analyzed (Krippendorff, 2013; Schreier, 2014). Information in the documents informed the narrative on the history of the consortium and led to the creation of the list of past COBEC projects presented in Appendix E; categorization of the projects (Appendix F) and the list of COBEC’s publications, grants, and media presented in Appendix G. Additionally, the review of documents informed the economic impact analysis that follows.

Economic Impact Analysis

Students and faculty attending COBEC partner institutions have not only made educational impacts, but economic impacts as well. A review of COBEC historical documents revealed a wide range of economic impact activities, ranging from *obvious* economic activity—lodging, transportation, food, excursions, or souvenirs to *less-obvious* economic activity—professional development workshops rendering intellectual capital, in-kind internship placements, cellular phone “top-ups” or tuition fees paid to Belize institutions.

COBEC grants ranging from \$500USD to several thousands have been used for programs and workshops held in Belize in an effort to provide faculty and students with professional development necessary for quality service in creating sustainable country-wide programs. Examples of such programs offered by COBEC member institutions include: The External Moderation Project (1992), Student Assistance Program (SAP) workshops (1993), ATLIB research projects (1993; 1994), the Belize Master’s Degree Program (1996), Identifying and Accommodating Learning-Disabled Children project (1997), to name a few. More recently, the engagements of students in non-paid internships (that add value to the local Belize economy), students on study abroad, faculty attending annual conferences, and recruitment efforts, have all contributed to the on-going economic impact in Belize.

The assumption is that student engagement is singular to that of their educational experiences; however, their involvement has impacted multiple segments of “communities, economies, families” within Belize (Tompson, Beekman, Tompson, & Kolbe, 2013). According to Thompson, economic impacts can be classified in three ways: *direct expenditures* (i.e., money spent while in Belize at a restaurant), *indirect expenditures* (i.e., when the restaurant owner uses the money received from a student to purchase additional supplies), and *induced expenditures* (i.e., money earned by Belizean employees working at the restaurant can now be used to purchase items for their households). Thompson suggests “a standard approach to economic impact estimation begins by qualifying some initial economic event, and then estimating these three levels of economic effects that result from the original event.” One such example could best be described via study abroad programs.

Globalization has made the movement of products, services, and people much easier. Open economies have resulted in increased international trade with fewer barriers. As such, more and more students and faculty are traveling and studying abroad. Students of all disciplines are engaging in international travel; however, some Business schools deem studying abroad as an integral part of the type of experiences that students need in order to be successful in this ever-changing global economy (Dieck-Assad, 2013). According to Klebnikob, “Latin America and Caribbean destinations have increased by 13%, and the region now accounts for 16% of total American students overseas, the second largest grouping after Europe” (Klebnikov, 2015). The growth of Business schools’ demand to engage students abroad, coupled with the growth of international business, has spurred interest in both the educational preparedness of students and the economic opportunities that exists for business owners.

The COBEC archives have a host of activities that demonstrate the level of economic impact on Belize that member institutions have had. For example, the University of North Florida (UNF), University College of Belize (UCB, now University of Belize), and the Ministry of Education began offering a M.Ed. program in Belize. This program enrolled 62 students, of which 5 UNF students received internships and 20 Belizean students attended classes as UNF on scholarship (COBEC, 1995). Another example took place in 1997 in which 16 Belizean students and 11 U.S. students participated in the Belize School of Nursing program.

In fact, researchers that support study abroad/educational travel/educational tourism are interested in ensuring that such experiences have positive “economic, socio-cultural, and environmental” impacts versus negative. Tourism’s success has contributed positively to economic growth, and in turn, has helped organizers of study abroad programs identify global economies to which they wish to travel. The absence of research to support such economic impacts is lacking (Long, Vogelarr, & Hale, 2014).

According to Mihi-Ramierz and Kumpikaite (2013), when students and faculty make decisions to travel abroad, economic factors can either be pull (i.e., those factors that make wanting to travel to Belize more attractive) or push (i.e., those factors that make wanting to travel to Belize less attractive). Examples of factors that would “pull” students to engage and participate in study abroad programs may include their expectations of the benefits of a good education, low consumer prices, or the economic development of the country. In addition, “push” factors may include bad living conditions, low university support, or higher tax systems. An example of the economic impact of a study abroad is shown in Table 8 to provide a benchmark for understanding the economic impact of U.S. students traveling abroad on the local Belizean economy.

Table 8

Sample Study Abroad Economic Impact Model

Estimated Cost of a 4-Week Study Abroad	# of participants	Total amount of a 4-Week Study Abroad	Total amount of spending in Belize (x 2 fixed exchange)
\$2,992 USD/student	8 students	\$23,936USD	\$47,872BZ

Actual amount paid by students from a U.S. COBEC member institution who participated in a 4-week program in Belize.

Of the \$2,992USD shown in Table 8, approximately \$600USD (remains in the U.S. economy) is used for transportation to/from the airport and to purchase an airline ticket to travel to Belize; thus, the remaining \$2,392USD, which translates to \$4,784BZ is spent in Belize/person. Belize in-country expenditures include transportation, lodging, food, stipends, laundry fees, medical expenses, service-learning expenses, excursions, vendor fees, etc. For example, if eight students traveled to Belize at a cost of \$4,784BZ per person, that translates to an economic impact of \$38,272BZ on the local Belize economy. To gain an understanding of the impact of this example, if duplicated by the 24 U.S. COBEC member institutions, see Table 9.

The sample in Table 9 is limited by the number of study abroad events taken by each U.S. COBEC member institution, the number of students who participate, the length of time per stay, and the per-participant amount established by the program organizer. Notwithstanding, the sample provides a framework for understanding the range of economic impact on the Belize economy by U.S. member institutions participating in programs, like a study abroad.

Other factors not represented in the sample include important considerations of the time of year in which travel takes place (i.e., low- vs. high-season for tourism), the type of program (i.e., study abroad vs. exchange program), the level of students (i.e., undergraduates vs. graduate), the type of participants (i.e., students vs. faculty vs. both), and the purpose of travel (i.e., educational vs. conferences).

It is important to note that the *Statistical Institute of Belize* (2017), in conjunction with the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) conducts an informal assessment of data from individuals traveling via the Belize City Airport. The 8-question survey (Appendix H) provides travelers with an opportunity to share information about the estimated costs while in Belize. The benefit of such a survey is that it provides some quantitative data that can be used to estimate the economic impact of tourism; however, without access to actual vs. estimated data, such economic impacts are difficult to measure.

Table 9

Sample Study Abroad Model showing a Multiplier Effect of COBEC Schools Using \$38,272BZ as the Base Amount

Estimated # of U.S. COBEC Institutions	# study abroad events/year	Est. economic impact
If 1 institution held only	1 study abroad of 8 students	\$38,272BZ
If 5 institutions held only	1 study abroad of 8 students	\$191,360BZ
If 10 institutions held only	1 study abroad of 8 students	\$382,720BZ
If 15 institutions held only	1 study abroad of 8 students	\$574,080BZ
If all 24 institutions held only	1 study abroad of 8 students	\$918,528BZ

The *Statistical Institute of Belize*, with support from the Belize Tourism Board, collects education, health, and tourism statistics. According to the SIB, U.S. tourist arrivals were estimated at 104,717 in 2000—and have increased over the past 10 years with 145,977 in 2005, 145,872 in 2010, and 215,183 in 2015. These figures show an increase in the number of tourists between 1999 and 2015. This increase is evident of the number of Americans, tourists, students or faculty researchers traveling to Belize to support the economic landscape of the nation.

Economic Impact on U.S.

The Economic Impact of COBEC partnerships has been enormous. U.S. colleges and universities (Table 10) reported that 1,176 Belizean students have attended or graduated from their institutions; thus, confirming the economic impact on the U.S. economy. Notwithstanding, the reciprocal of such impact on the Belizean market is also worth noting.

Most Belizean students were awarded U.S. in-state tuition grants ranging between \$5,000USD and \$10,000USD dollars, which represented a significant cost savings to Belizean students. The combined amounts represented approximately \$5,955,000 on the low end and \$11,910,000 on the high end. For the University of North Florida, the total amount that UNF/SUS contributed (so far) to the human capital of Belize is a total of \$4,814,741. Of this amount, \$3,648,071.50 was contributed to graduate education, and \$1,166,741.50 to undergraduate tuition. In the case of Valdosta State University, the contribution was approximately \$100,000 using a multiplier of \$10,000 for out of state tuition.

Table 10

Sample of U.S. institutions that have hosted Belizean Students for Higher Education Degrees

Institution	Belizean students
Albany State University	1
Bridgewater State University	18
Georgia College and State University	1
Murray State University	131
New Mexico State University	6
Oklahoma State University	25
SUNY Cortland University	1
University of Arkansas	15
University of Florida	7
University of North Florida	578
University of South Florida	285
Valdosta State University	100
Western Kentucky University	8
TOTAL	1,176

Summary of Part Three

Measuring economic impacts in developing countries—and within the U.S.—is not without its challenges. The system of bartering, black markets, and undocumented transactions makes it impossible to measure exact amounts; however, such a challenge creates an opportunity for COBEC to begin to find ways to create an electronic repository for collecting tuition, travel, registration, and expenditures real-time, in an effort to gain a better understanding of the magnitude of the economic impact.

Economic impact findings could help organizations like COBEC, ATLIB, and the Ministry of Education in Belize to find ways to leverage such funds toward educational and economic benefit for students and faculty alike. An important factor to note is that travel to Belize by U.S. COBEC member faculty, students, and staff generates direct, indirect, and induced expenditures that have a positive impact on the local Belizean economy.

PART FOUR

QUALITATIVE DESIGN, METHODOLOGY, AND RESULTS

Purpose and Design

The evaluation team collected, analyzed, and interpreted interview data to understand participants' views and beliefs about how COBEC addressed the three overarching questions and their associated subgoals. Our purpose was also to corroborate the survey and economic impact findings in Parts 2 and 3.

Consequently, we employed a qualitative design (Flick, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016) and collected data that described the views and beliefs of selected COBEC members. The following sections describe the methodology and results.

Methodology

Instrumentation and Participants

We developed the interview protocol shown in Appendix I based on COBEC's stated purpose, mission, and goal statements, which are accessible on its website (<http://cobec.org/>). We then established relationships between the interview questions and the three overarching questions with Spradley's "means-end" semantic relationship (2003). The instrument validation process included two steps. During Step 1 six knowledgeable and research-savvy COBEC members assisted with validating the instrument using Litwin's (1995) validation checklist. During Step 2 we collected the instruments with raters' comments and suggestions, corrected three typographical errors, and excluded several questions because raters suggested the instrument was too long.

We purposively sampled and invited twelve individuals to be interviewed; eleven consented. As shown in Table 11, of the eleven participants, four were females and seven were males; seven were affiliated with U.S. tertiary institutions and four with Belize institutions.

Data Collection

Four members of the evaluation team volunteered and interviewed eleven participants. Two members conducted two interviews each, one conducted three interviews, and one conducted four interviews. All eleven interviews were audio recorded and submitted to a professional transcribing company (www.transcribeme.org) for transcription.

Table 11

Description of Participants

Participants	Gender	Country	Yrs. COBEC Member	Position/Role in COBEC
P1*	F	US	25	Co-Chair
P2	M	US	25	Co-Chair
P3	M	US	25	Program Planner
P4	M	US	18	Co-Chair
P5	M	US	24	Meeting Host
P6	M	US	20	Treasurer
P7	M	US	20	Program Planner
P8	M	BZ	28	Co-Chair
P9	F	BZ	28	Co-Chair/Secretary
P10	F	BZ	26	Co-Chair/Various Committees
P11	F	BZ	23	Treasurer/Secretary

*P1 = Participant 1, P2 = Participant 2, and so on

Subjectivity and positionality

Subjectivity plays an integral role in all empirical research. This truism is especially applicable to qualitative studies and to this part of the evaluation study. As Janesick (2000) observed, “There is no value-free or bias-free design,” and “there is no attempt to pretend the research is value-free” (p. 385). While conducting this phase of the study, we were mindful of the fact that one does not reduce subjectivity, but rather describes it, and that positionality is “shaped by subjective-contextual factors such as personal life history and experience” (Chiseri-Strater, 1996, p. 116). We all are in one way or another associated with COBEC and therefore have particular interests in its development and continuance. We also have deep interests in its purpose, mission, and goals. We therefore acknowledged our positions as tertiary educators whose careers in academe range from 20 to 60 years, but, importantly, we acknowledged our obligation to be as objective as humanly possible while conducting the interviews and subsequently analyzing and interpreting the results of the study.

Confirming findings

It could be argued that our positions or involvement with COBEC may have influenced the results of the evaluation. However, to reduce the likelihood of position influence, we took the necessary steps to ensure confirmability and trustworthiness of the results and findings (Flick, 2014; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). First, we triangulated the data collection process by asking four team members to check and verify the accuracy of participants' responses to the interview questions. Second, we taped recorded each interview, which resulted in eleven audio files that were transcribed by a professional company (Transcribeme.com). Third, to ensure transcript accuracy, we conducted member checking (Marshall & Rossman; 2016, Saldana, 2015) where each interviewer called or wrote participants to clarify unclear responses in the transcript. This procedure resulted in seven transcripts on which corrections or clarifications were not needed and four in which interviewees made minor revisions in the transcripts. Fourth, we conducted peer review (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Members of the team periodically discussed the evaluation process and provided tentative interpretations. Finally, and as shown in Table 12, we used MAXQDA's Intercoder Agreement function and calculated interrater reliability coefficients between three pairs of coders—between the principal investigator (PI) and two team members, and between the PI and one doctoral student.

PI coded all eleven transcripts. Then one member of the evaluation team (Rater 1) independently coded Transcripts 502, 504, 505, and 505; a second member of the team (Rater 2) independently coded Transcripts 503, 507, and 508; and a doctoral student (Rater 3) at the University of North Florida independently coded Transcripts 501, 506, 509, and 511. In two instances (Transcripts 503 and 509) where $k < .70$, we discussed discrepancies until we agreed to or reached consensus on assigning a code to an appropriate passage in a transcript. As shown in Table 12, the levels of agreement ranged from moderate ($k = .75$) to almost perfect ($k = .92$).

Data Treatment and Management

After we verified the accuracy of the transcripts, we converted the files to rich text format and uploaded them in MAXQDA (Version 12, 2016), a qualitative data analysis software program. We used this program to store, manage, and assist with the analysis of participants' responses—open and axial coding, memoing, and segment retrieval. Throughout the analysis phase we were mindful of the admonition that a software program only helps with data management and retrieval, not with interpretation (Flick, 2014; Kuckartz, 2014).

Definition of terms

To help facilitate the coding process, we defined the predetermined evaluative categories and terms in the questionnaire by relying on ERIC's Thesaurus (<https://eric.ed.gov/>), the *Oxford Dictionary of the English Language* (2013), and extant literature (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Alivernini & Wildova, 2013; Breen, et al., 2003; Helms, 2015; Maringe & Foskett, 2012; Paulsen, 2017; Shin et al., 2013). We relied on these sources because in some instances definitions in one source were not consistent with the term used in the questions. Our definitions appear where appropriate throughout this part of the evaluation.

Table 12

Cohen's Coefficients Between PI and Raters 1, 2 and 3

Transcript Number	Words in Transcript/ Lines of Texts	PI CP*	Rater 1		Rater 2		Rater 3	
			CP	k	CP	k	CP	k
501	5716/616	43					62	.84
502	6294/732	45	50	.88				
503	1517/153	30			24	.75		
504	7857/684	39	42	.85				
505	6356/629	51	40	.86				
506	5900/605	19					29	.82
507	2346/391	20			25	.87		
508	3760/388	49			38	.80		
509	3767/359	42					35	.78
510	6379/641	49	48	.89				
511	5716/616	52	63	.92				

*CP = coded passages

Because we were concerned about COBEC's impact on Belize tertiary institutions, and, to a lesser degree on U.S. tertiary institutions, we highlighted (italicized) instances where participants expressed sentiments associated with strong influence, consequence, or strong effect. Examples included "great deal," "very effective," "tremendous impact," "tremendous effect," "significant impact," "significant contribution," "big benefit," and "I think significantly."

Alignment of the Interview and Overarching Questions

We established relationships between the three overarching questions and the interview questions with Spradley's "means-end" semantic relationship. As depicted in Table 13, Question 5a through 5g were categorized as ways to address or *professionalize higher education in Belize*; Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5c were categorized as ways to *internationalize member institutions*; and Questions 6, 11, and 12 were categorized as ways to *strengthen COBEC's organizational capacity*. Participants' responses to Questions 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 14 addressed participants' beliefs about other aspects of COBEC and were analyzed separately.

Table 13

Means-End Analysis Based on Spradley's (1998) Semantic Relationships

Interview Questions	Semantic relationship	Overarching Questions/Themes
Q3 increase int'l collaboration Q5a facilitate collaboration Q5c implement systematic planning Q5d develop human resources	ways to	professionalize higher education in Belize
Q1 link post-secondary institutions Q2 strengthen/expand Bz capabilities Q5b promote exchanges Q5e identify financial resources Q5g encourage study abroad Q4 promote better understanding between cultures	ways to	internationalize member institutions
Q6 achieve goals Q11 address challenges and concerns Q12 consider recommendations	ways to	strengthen COBEC's organizational capacity

Data Analysis Procedures

We adapted Kuckartz's (2014) evaluative text analysis process to analyze participants' responses to the evaluation questions because it was specifically suited to the study and because, expectantly, it shields us from the "black box" criticism described by Evers (2016). The criticism holds that qualitative data analysis is more often than not mysterious and furtive largely because researchers do not adequately describe the process. The seven steps in the evaluative qualitative text analysis process depicted in Figure 6 dictated and facilitated the way we analyzed our eleven participants' responses to the three overarching research questions. However, we limited our analysis to Phases 1 through 6 because we were interested in question- and category-based analysis and not detailed interpretation of cases. Kuckartz explained evaluative text analysis this way:

Unlike in thematic analysis, which focuses on identifying, systematizing, and analyzing topics and sub-topics and how they are related, evaluative qualitative text analysis involves assessing, classifying, and evaluating content. Researchers or coders assess the data and build categories, whose characteristics are usually noted as ordinal numbers of levels. (p. 88)

Despite Kuckartz's focus on "assessing, classifying, and evaluating content (p.88)," we nevertheless augmented his model by using thematic analysis methods, especially during Phase 1 and 2 where we defined the categories and identified and coded text passages. The evaluative strategies consisted of open coding using Flicks "so-called basic questions," axial coding with

Spradley’s semantic relationships (Spradley, 1998), Ryan and Bernard’s (2003) similarities and differences techniques, and evaluation coding as presented by Saldana (2009).

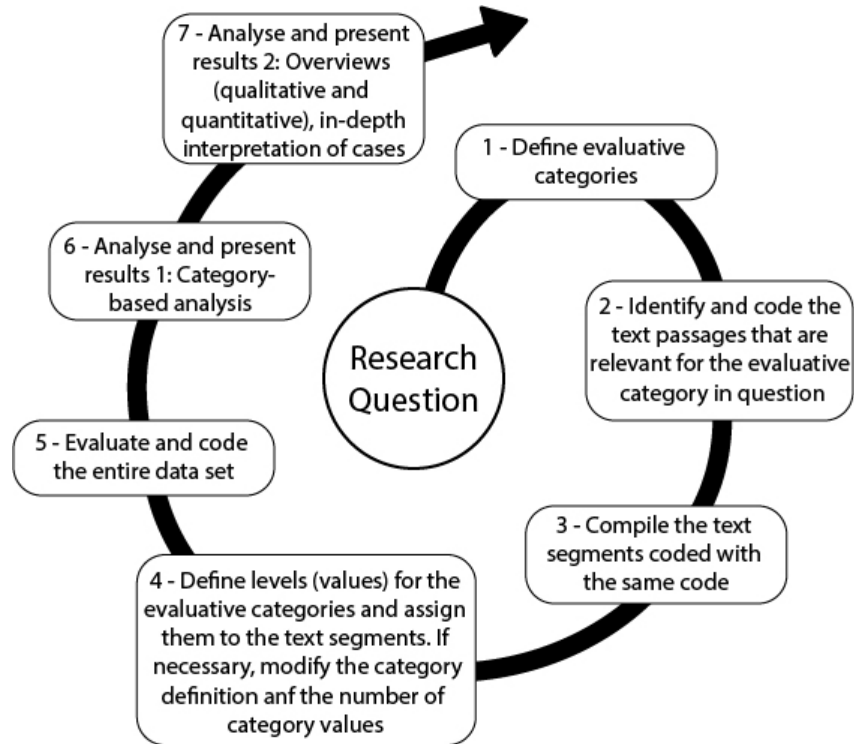


Figure 6. Kuckartz’s evaluative text analysis process

Phase 1: Determine the categories (based on the research questions) that should be used as evaluative categories

During this phase, we identified the evaluative categories in the research questions. In other words, the questions and related subquestions in the interview protocol provided predetermined categories (Kuckartz, 2014) used in the study. We chose this strategy to identify categories rather than including them as thematic categories because, as Kuckartz asserted, “. . . there must be a strong connection between the categories or types of categories and the research questions” (p. 90). We then illustrated the relationships between the research questions and evaluative categories with Spradley’s (1998) means-end and attribution forms and thus established the rationale with which we classified and organized the categories evident in the research questions. The terms, evaluative categories, and themes are shown in Table 14.

Phase 2: Identify and code the text passages that are relevant to the evaluative category in question

Initial/open coding

We coded or “broke the data apart” and delineated concepts to stand for blocks of raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 2008) and addressed the text by “identifying central concepts or categories” (Becker, 2005, p. 276). Since the interview questions provided predetermined categories, and to

ensure that we accurately captured interviewees' responses, we used MAXQDA lexical search feature and searched for key terms throughout the data set. The codes were organized in MAXQDA's coding system, which assisted with the two coding procedures—open and axial. As we read each transcript, we regularly “addressed the text” by asking Flick’s eight “basic questions:”

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>What</i> | What is the issue here? Which phenomenon is mentioned? |
| 2. <i>Who?</i> | Which person, actors are involved: Which roles do they play? How do they interact? |
| 3. <i>How?</i> | Which aspects of the phenomenon are mentioned or not mentioned? |
| 4. <i>When? How long? Where?</i> | Time? Course? Location? |
| 5. <i>How much? How strong?</i> | Aspects of intensity? |
| 6. <i>What for?</i> | With what intention, to which purpose? |
| 7. <i>By which?</i> | Means, tactics, and strategies for reaching the goal? (p. 310) |

Axial coding

Axial coding “involves relating categories to their subcategories” (Becker, 2005, p. 276). Axial coding also means “relating minor concepts to broader level concepts” (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, p. 198) based on properties (characteristics) and dimensions (less, more, higher, lower, etc.). We conducted axial coding by using Spradley’s semantic relationships (1998) and Ryan and Bernard’s (2003) similarities and differences techniques.

Table 14

Spradley’s Semantic Relationships

Form	Semantic Relationship
Strict inclusion	Is expressed as <i>X</i> is a kind of <i>Y</i>
Spatial	Is expressed as <i>X</i> is a place in <i>Y</i>
Cause-effect	Is expressed as <i>X</i> is a result of <i>Y</i>
Rationale	Is expressed as <i>X</i> is a reason for doing <i>Y</i>
Location for action	Is expressed as <i>X</i> is a place for doing <i>Y</i>
Function	Is expressed as <i>X</i> is used for <i>Y</i>
Means-end	Is expressed as <i>X</i> is a way to do <i>Y</i>
Sequence	Is expressed as <i>X</i> is a step-in <i>Y</i>
Attribution	Is expressed as <i>X</i> is a characteristic of <i>Y</i>

Note: Summarized from Spradley (1979).

After establishing relationships between the evaluation questions and categories, we then used Spradley’s means-end analysis and established relationships between terms, categories, and the three overarching themes reflected in each research question. Tables 15, 16, and 17 show the relationships.

Table 15

Relationships Across Terms and Categories for the Theme: “Advance Professionalization in Belize”

Terms	Semantic Relationships	Categories	Theme
Establish partnerships Develop articulation agreements Provide advanced degree training opportunities	ways to	Increase international collaboration	Advance professionalization in Belize
Research Development Teaching Development Curriculum/Program Dev Library Development	ways to	Facilitate/strengthen collaboration	
Professional/Staff Dev Development Seminars Café workshops	ways to	Develop human resources	
Collective/Individual Efforts Consultant Team	ways to	Implement systematic and comprehensive planning	

Table 16

Relationships Across Codes and Categories for the Theme: ‘Internationalization of Member Institution’

Terms	Semantic relationship	Categories	Theme
COBEC’s Org structure Networks and partnerships	ways to	Develop linkages	Internationalization of member institutions
Faculty Student Staff	kinds of	Exchanges	
Scholarships Grants In-State Tuition Tuition waiver	kinds of (strict inclusion)	Financial aid for students	

Table 16 (continued)

Terms	Semantic relationship	Categories	Theme
Exemplars Colorado State Univ. Louisiana State Univ. Univ. of North Florida Kennesaw State Univ. Murray State Univ. Univ. of Belize	place for doing	Study abroad	
COBEC Semi-Annual Conferences Student Visits/Interactions Student Visits/Interaction Cultural exchange	ways to	Promote better understanding between cultures	

Table 17

Relationships Across Categories and Terms for the Theme: 'Strengthened Organizational Capacity'

Terms	Semantic relationship	Categories	Themes
Revisit Goals Improve Meetings Use Technology Increase Financial Aid	ways to	Address challenges and recommendations	Strengthened COBEC's organizational capacity

Phase 3: Compile text segments coded with the same category

During this phase, we used MAXQDA's text retrieval function and compiled text passages coded with the same codes for each category. For example, Appendix J displays a partial list of P1's compiled passages for the category "Facilitate collaboration" coded with 'collaboration and partnership,' and Appendix K displays an example of P5's compiled text passages coded with 'link post-secondary institutions.' As Kuckartz (2014) explained, these "thematically relevant passages" served as the starting point for the analytical work in Phase 4 and Phase 5.

Phase 4: Define levels (values) for the evaluative categories and assign them to the text segments. If necessary, modify the category definition and the number of category values

We conducted evaluation coding, which, according to Rallis and Rossman (as cited in Saldana, 2009), “is the application of non-quantitative codes into qualitative data that assign judgment about the merit and worth of programs or policy” (p. 97). Thus, we defined “levels (values) for the evaluative categories and assigned them to the text segments.” In addition to identifying and coding text passages during Phase 2 about participants’ beliefs and sentiments, evaluation coding was necessary because we were interested in specific examples of COBEC programs and activities that illustrated COBEC’s impact on higher education in Belize and the U.S.

During this phase of the analysis we developed and defined weighted values that distinguished between three characteristics— “highly representative of a category” to which we assigned a value of 3, “moderately representative” of a category to which we assigned a value of 2, and “unable to classify” to which we assigned a value of 1. Table 18.1 shows, for example, the definitions as well as prototypical examples for the category ‘Increase International Collaboration.’ Note the distinguishing elements between the “moderately representative” and “highly representative” characteristics. Whereas the “moderately representative” characteristic is defined by an expression of a sentiment with either no examples, or examples of activity(ies) with no belief or sentiment expressed, the “highly representative” characteristic is defined by a specific, clear belief or sentiment and examples of activity(ies). To save space in the main body of this document, we have appended the remaining tables (18.2-18.13) with other evaluative categories in Appendix L.

Table 18.1

Definition of the Category ‘Increase International Collaboration’ with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant’s response is unclear and example(s) are not articulated	No prototypical example
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment or activity(ies) that increase international collaboration between member institutions	Expression of a b/sentiment with no examples of activity(ies) that increase international collaboration between member institutions or example with no sentiment expressed	‘As I say, the programs in the area that COBEC has done the best, has been educational programs, study abroad, research programs. It had faculty exchanges. It has an immense number of things, the size, the complexity of the group that it’s been able to carry on in the program dimension.’

Table 18.1 (continued)

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
3: Highly representative of a sentiment and activity(ies) that increase international collaboration between member institutions	Expression of a b/sentiment and examples of activity(ies) that increase international collaboration between member institutions	‘There’s been a great deal of nursing training. We’ve actually exchanged nurses and done a lot of training in the nursing field. Especially Valdosta has an exchange, a nursing exchange. We’ve done a lot of shadowing for administrators, and we’ve sent auditors down and received auditors up at UNF to get some training in how to facilitate an audit within a school.’

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Phase 5: Evaluate and code the entire data set

We used the characteristics, their respective definitions, and prototypical examples shown in Tables 18.1 and 18.2 through 18.13 (Appendix L) to evaluate participants’ responses to the interview questions. This meant that after we conducted open and axial coding where we “related categories to subcategories [and] specified the properties and dimensions of a category” (Charmaz, 2006, as cited in Saldana, 2009, p. 159), we used MAXQDA’s weighted value function and recoded those text passages by applying the values with their related definitions and prototypical examples to the data set. We omitted the value 1 (response unclear and no examples articulated) and filtered by 2 and 3. The size of the symbols or color clusters in MAXQDA Figure 7 shows how often weighted values of 2 and 3 were assigned to each text segment. The larger the size of the symbol associated with each participant and theme, the more values of 2 and 3 were assigned to a participant’s segment. Thus, when Figure 7 is read horizontally, more values of 2 and 3 were assigned to passages aligned with the *professionalization* theme by P1, P5, and P10. Relative to *internationalization* theme, more values of 2 and 3 were assigned to passages by P1, P2, P5, P6, and P11. And relative to *strengthened capacity*, more values of 2 and 3 were assigned to passages by P5, P8, P9, and P10 than for other participants.

Conversely, if Figure 7 is read vertically, it shows that more passages were coded for P1, P5, P8, P10, and P11 than for other participants.

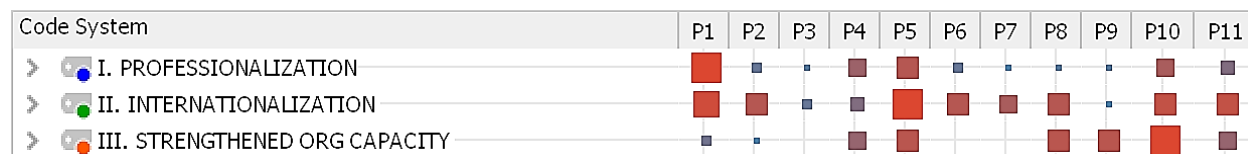


Figure 7. MAXQDA collapsed code system showing themes, participants, and colored clusters representing coded segments with weighted values 2 and 3 for each participant

Alternately, Figure 8 shows the expanded view of the code system with the themes, related categories, and the size of passages coded with weighted values 2 and 3. Note that with some exceptions, each participant and category had segments coded with weighted values of 2 or 3. The expanded code system shown in Figure 8 depicts how often segments for each participant on the x-axis of the table were associated with each evaluative category with values 2 and 3 shown along the y-axis.

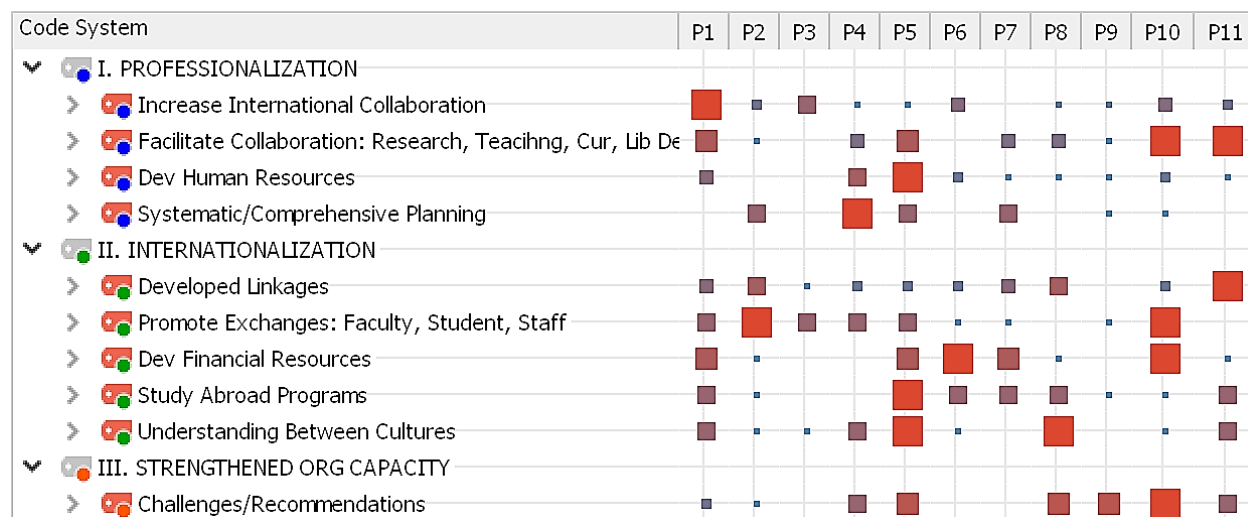


Figure 8. MAXQDA expanded code system showing themes, categories, participants, and colored clusters representing coded segments with weighted values 2-3 for each participant

Phase 6: Analyze and Present the Results: Category-Based Analysis

Kuckartz (2014) presents seven ways to analyze and present the results of an evaluative qualitative study. Of the seven, we chose verbal-interpretative analysis of each category because we were interested in providing a descriptive account of participants’ beliefs and sentiments about COBEC’s programs and activities that assumingly professionalized higher education in Belize, internationalized member institutions, and strengthened its organizational capacity. In other words, and consistent with the first of Van Maanen’s (2011) four basic ways of presenting research findings, this section presents what the eleven participants said and in what ways they said it relative to each evaluative category and the filtered characteristics indicated by weighted values 2 and 3.

We have organized our presentation of the results under the related categories and subcategories while referring to information in accompanying tables. Relevant passages or excerpts of participants’ verbatim descriptions will portray the beliefs and views about COBEC’s work over the past 30 years. Where necessary, we have included and discussed negative cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Flick, 2014) to help build credibility, and used rich, thick description to help ensure transferability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

This section of the analysis presents excerpted segments or passages and describes but does not interpret participants’ beliefs and sentiments. Presentation of the results is in two sections.

Section 1 focuses on text passages or excerpts associated with the categories, subcategories, and the themes of *professionalization*, *internationalization*, and *strengthening capacity*. It was during this part of the analysis that we used category characteristics and the weighted values (2's and 3's) to substantiate the analysis. Section 2 of the presentation focuses on text passages or extracts associated with *substantive accomplishments*, *major challenges and recommendations*, and *professional and personal benefits*.

Section 1 Results

Question 1: Professionalization: To what extent has COBEC designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities that address higher education in Belize?

For this evaluation, professionalization means designing, developing, and implementing professional programs and activities that augment and enhance tertiary education in Belize. Professionalization is also a transformational process that influences and impacts behavior, clarifies roles and responsibilities, enhances knowledge and skills, and encourages commitment to norms, values, and behaviors that eventually impact student learning. Importantly, professionalization encourages collaboration among institutions, programs, and individuals, as well as among distinct areas of higher education—faculty, research, and instruction (Amundsen & Wilson, 2012).

Collaboration in higher education means forming alliances and partnerships between institutions to address collective and individual institutional needs. From a strategic perspective, a “partnership is a formal alliance between two or more higher education institutions developed through an intentional process whereby partners share resources and leverage complementary strengths to achieve defined command objectives” (Obst & Kuder, 2009, p. xi). The following discussion focuses on how participants view COBEC’s professionalization goal through collaborative activities. Table 19 shows the categories, subcategories, and the number of participants who commented on the topic. The following presentation uses excerpted passages associated with each category and subcategory to describe participants’ views of how COBEC professionalized higher education in Belize.

Table 19

‘Professionalization’ Categories, Subcategories and Number of Participants

Category	Subcategories	# of Participants
Increase int’l collaboration	Partnerships/articulation agreements	10
	Advanced degree training	8
Facilitate collaboration	Research development	5
	Teaching development	9
	Curriculum development	4
	Library development	9

Table 19 (continued)

Category	Subcategories	# of Participants
Develop human resources	Professional/staff development	8
Implement sys/comp planning	Collective/Individual efforts	6

Increase International Collaboration/Partnerships

Table 19 shows there were 10 participants associated with ‘increase international collaboration.’ The following write-up presents and describes representative excerpted passages with the subcategory ‘partnerships and articulation agreements.’

Partnerships/Articulation Agreements

Participants’ discussion during the interviews reflects COBEC’s focus on its professionalization work through partnerships. One member shared that “a number of training programs that we are offering in Belize are partnered. It’s not just going down and offering something, it’s actually a collaborative of faculty for those programs” (P1). Other participants found Belizeans receptive while building “collaborative relationships, which turned out to be beneficial to both sides” (P3). Discussing his experience with a partnered activity, one participant shared:

I think we had somebody from the sciences. We had somebody in social work who went. We were able to start building relationships through departmental activities. I know the social work program was heavily influenced by the institution. That came through where the COBEC meets. We had the one at Las Cruces, you remember that one? (P6)

Commenting on her partnering experiences with Louisiana State University, Belize Participant 11 said:

Yes, we had a member—well we had an observer come down from Louisiana State University that ended up in a partnership with Wesley Junior College. They didn't pursue all the way to COBEC membership. But that partnership still exists. Every year LSU students come down to Wesley Junior College and we set up a program for them . . . Their students get to do a study abroad course that is facilitated by Wesley Junior College. Even though we may not credit all of it to COBEC. Because COBEC existed, then this opportunity came up. Even non-COBEC members benefit from COBEC’s existence. (P11)

Similarly, Participant 10 shared her partnership experience with the University of North Carolina-Wilmington:

Like with the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, we offer a dual degree. Six of the courses are offered by UNCW, [and UB] offers six. And there's an exchange of adaptability. Also, if we had more full-time faculty for our faculty to do some significant research together-- we had a meeting some time ago, I think it must have been at the Biltmore Plaza. It might have been Wesley College [?], I'm not sure. But at that meeting, for the first time-- and I remember playing a significant role in all of it-- I was in that meeting. We had presentations being made by Belizeans to our U.S. partners.

Other partnerships through articulation agreements included Murray State and the University of Belize, New Mexico State University and Sacred Heart Junior College, the University of North Florida and Sacred Heart Junior College, and the University of North Florida and the University of Belize. Taken together, the partnerships suggest that COBEC contributed to the professionalization of member institutions through collaborative and partnered activities.

Advanced Degree training

Participants shared about graduate or advanced training for students with bachelor's and master's degrees. They reported that "students who have left regional institutions at the junior level and transferred to many U.S. institutions ..." (P10). This participant also shared about a faculty from USF who had his master's degree from Colorado State" and that "quite a few of my adjuncts are COBEC graduates." Another participant explained that COBEC's impact on professionalizing higher education in Belize could be measured by counting "the number of people who are graduating from COBEC's institutions and [going] on for higher degrees at those institutions" (P2). In fact, participants reported that there were over 500 UNF graduates living and working in Belize now." However, 500 students may be a small estimate when compared to the thousands who Participant 8 said "have benefited from COBEC by attending universities at a reasonable and appropriate cost" and "have come back to help Belize in its development." Other participants talked about their experiences with helping graduate students at their respective universities. For example, Participant 6 said he tried to encourage Belize institutions "to send us graduate students. Then we find them an assistantship and they automatically got the in-state waiver." He later commented on the quality and readiness of graduate students and shared this impression:

Man, these were good students. Jeez. You've got English speaking, good students. Isabelle [Tomb?], when she came up to the campus she created a wonderful impression among the faculty. She was just so accomplished in what she was doing. They were really happy with her and talked about her and looked for other students. Hey, send me more graduates students. We'd love to have them in our university.

The impact of COBEC endeavors on Belize higher education can also be determined through what other participants reported:

I know the interest in study abroad, the interest in faculty exchanges, the benefits derived from connecting all graduates to further studies, either to at the graduate or undergraduate level, I think, it's a *big benefit*.to at the graduate or undergraduate level, I think, it's a *big benefit*. P9

For one, I think the University of Belize, in particular, has developed *tremendously* over the years as a result of that corporation through COBEC. Two, thousands of students, as you mentioned earlier, have benefited from COBEC by attending universities at a reasonable and appropriate cost. Those students have come back to help. P8

But I think probably the *greatest, truly the greatest*, were the graduate opportunities offered Belizean students. So many from, particularly, doctoral degrees that were offered then and through COBEC, as well as master's degrees offered through COBEC. That's had a *tremendous impact* on the development of education in Belize. Because it provided so many graduate-trained teachers, principals, and post-secondary institution leaders. P7
In sum, participants believed providing advanced degree training opportunities for Belize students was among COBEC's foremost accomplishments.

Facilitate Collaboration in Research, Teaching, Curricular, and Library Development

Research development

As shown in Table 19, there were 5 participants associated with research development as a collaborative goal. When asked to describe to what extent they believe COBEC has been successful in facilitating research, participants were divided in their perspectives. Some expressions were favorable, but most were unfavorable. Participant 1 and Participant 5 posited the following:

I had a grant that faculty members [used to conduct] research in Belize with Belize counterparts. That instant added information for our accreditation US, actually. This is in the business school. That was a USDOE grant and it helped UNF get accreditation in the College of Business. P1

I worked a little while with a faculty member that's been doing manual research in Belize. We shared all the information with the Belize Ministry of Natural Resources. That was then used for some of the strategic planning for the future of Belize. Without COBEC, maybe those people would have never found each other and created this information that was helpful to both parties. P5

The first statement reflects the impact a COBEC research development activity had on a U.S. institution through collaboration with Belizean counterparts. The second shows the impact of a partnered research project on a major Belizean institution—the Ministry of Natural Resources. However, while these two examples show COBEC's attempt to fulfill its research mission, other participants saw research activities as inadequate or not addressing one of COBEC's major goal of facilitating collaboration via research development. The following comments by Participants 7 and 9 represent the group's sentiment about collaborative and partnered research:

Well, I'm not sure I know about all of those. But I think COBEC has probably been least effective, although somewhat effective with regard to research. There have been a few

researches that was done by Belize's [institutions]. So, they got some training in doing research. P7

This might be a selfish answer right now because of where I work, I think that we have not tested the waters of research. It's not even tested the waters, we have not explored research. P9

Relatedly, when Participant 10 was asked to what extent he believed COBEC has been unsuccessful in achieving its goals, his response mirrored that of P7 and 9: "I think maybe the joined research, only the joined research." On the whole, while participants were able to cite some instances when collaboration on research development occurred, the sentiments expressed by these three participants reflected how most participants perceived and articulated COBEC's collaborative research goal.

Comparison: Overall, while most participants believed COBEC has been unsuccessful with facilitating collaborative and partnered research, most Belize participants were more direct and expressive about this goal. In the words of Participant 7: "...we have not tested the waters of research." This comment may reflect research projects discussed by COBEC U.S. members but not initiated or conducted through joint or collaborative partnerships with Belizean members.

Teaching development

As shown in Table 19, there were 9 participants associated with teacher development as a collaborative goal. While discussing their views on teacher development as an activity COBEC facilitated, P1 provided this historical perspective:

A number of training programs that we are offering in Belize are partnered. It's not just US going down and offering something, it's actually a collaborative with faculty for those programs. We use Belize faculty as much as U.S. faculty. In fact, the first time I offered a program in Belize, we had a U.S. faculty member partnered with a [Belizean partner]. P1

This passage certifies that collaborating and partnering between Belize faculty as much as U.S. faculty were integral parts of COBEC's mission. The truth of this observation was corroborated by Participant 10, who, while commenting on COBEC's successes, explained:

Another thing that I think I contributed to COBEC was... when we do one of the CAFE workshops ... we have Belizean partner presenting alongside. So, we had CAFE workshops here at the Sacred Heart, we flew in _____. She was at USF at the time. She came down and presented a workshop alongside someone I don't remember...P10

Participant 10 later shared how partnering with another faculty resulted in a virtual class with students from both Belize and the United States:

Yeah, so, we had a guy from Ecumenical working along with somebody else from USF, and they—or Hillsboro on remedial math—[worked on developing remedial math] at the college level. So, they actually linked up over the Internet beforehand and planned the

workshop and presented side by side. I think that that is valuable.

The success of teaching development as a collaborative endeavor was also expressed by Participant 11, who shared:

Yes, and I know that a lot of the collaborative activities have resulted in faculty members of our tertiary institutions, for instance, acquiring credits that they have been able to use to their own benefit in pursuing courses, and/or they've also been able to work alongside COBEC faculty who come down, for instance, in the teacher education programs... I know, at Sacred Heart, they had a study abroad course and it was a requirement that one faculty from Belize work alongside the faculty from the UNF...P11

Participant 8 supported this observation when she said:

I know in the case of UB, and others, a number of the instructors did their doctorate, which makes the delivery of the programs more acceptable, more viable, more accredited. A number have received master's degrees, come back, and are in a better position to deliver their programs, and they're more effective and efficient. It's helped to strengthen the personnel...P8

Additionally, Participant 10 likewise commented on how COBEC influenced teaching development through collaboration and partnership when he expressed:

And I think, to a lot of extent, the fact that we have students who have left regional institutions at the junior college level and transferred into many of our U.S. partner institutions...have two people who earned PhDs at New Mexico State University. One of my [administrators] signed an agreement with New Mexico that Sacred Heart Junior College accepts faculty teachers, interns, from New Mexico State for 12 weeks. P10

But while most participants articulated positive views about partnership and teaching development, a few expressed concerns. Commenting on past experiences, Participant 11 explained:

We're not as strong as we used to be. When we used to have the CAFE workshops where teaching faculty would come down, and we would use that as a chance for Belizean faculty to partner with U.S. institution faculty. That was good. P11

Other participants like Participant 10 commented on what appears to be a current limitation of teaching development: "... when these teachers go up—when region teachers go, they go with their base salaries and they have to support themselves alone in the US. And that doesn't go very far. But now, with technology, we could do a lot more with that."

This observation speaks to the insufficiency of financial assistance to support Belizean teachers who desire to continue their education at a U.S. institution. Other participants did not support the views expressed by Participants 10 and 11. On the whole, most participants believed teaching development was one of COBEC's successful endeavors.

Comparison: Both Belize and U.S. participants believed COBEC facilitated collaboration and partnerships in teaching. However, two Belize participants (P10 and P11) expressed concerns about COBEC's efforts with teaching development. Apparently, their knowledge of and experience with teaching development in Belize are not consistent with what other participants know or have experienced.

Curriculum/Program development

Of the subcategories that comprise the facilitating collaboration category, Table 19 shows program and curriculum development with the smallest number of participants who responded. Two participants commented on how COBEC contributions positively impacted curriculum development in Belize. For example, Participant 10 commented that curriculum developed was positively impacted when "John Kemppainen had come down and signed articulation agreements with junior colleges across Belize, Sacred Heart Junior College was one of them." Additionally, Participant 8 also reported:

As I mentioned before in terms of curriculum development, this was where our local tertiary level institutions work with the U.S. tertiary level institutions to upgrade and enhance the programs that are being delivered in Belize. So, in that regard, the exchange has been *tremendous* and most helpful. P8

Another participant commented on how COBEC assisted UB with developing its curriculum through printed catalogs, which eventually included pre-professional courses necessary for transfer to a U.S. university:

It doesn't sound like a *very significant* thing, but at the beginning, the tertiary institutions in Belize did not have bulletins or catalogs of their courses—a printed catalog for students. So, we did desktop publishing at the institution we partnered with. Say, UNF partnered with, let's say Stann Creek Ecumenical. We helped them develop their catalog and then printed it for them at first and showed them how to do desktop printing. Thereby, now all tertiary institutions have a *very nice* catalog of courses, and it's in some ways linked with U.S. institutions, so that they know those English courses in Belize can transfer to the English courses in the US. It also linked with the articulation agreement, which I think is a *very important* thing. P1

While these three participants shared positive experiences with curriculum development, the majority of participants offered no evidence that supports COBEC's successes with facilitating curriculum development.

Library development

Table 19 shows that of the four subcategories comprising facilitating collaboration, library development had the most participants (9) who shared about library development. The prevalent view was best expressed by Participant 2, who share that "Library development has been a feature from the beginning, and a lot of library work with librarians going to Belize, and Belize librarians coming up to American institutions." Participant 1 substantiated this view when she

stated: “In large part, many of the libraries in Belize, in Belize institutions, were facilitated or enhanced by librarians from COBEC institutions. That is one we didn't touch on, but should have...”

Of the activities involved in library development, books donated to Belize’s secondary and tertiary institutions seemed to be the most pervasive and recurring subtheme. Note the following examples from Participants 4 and 5:

But I think over the years, with the project that Danny Berenburg had going with his daughter in Belize, we sent 200,000 books down, and the U.S Navy was able to transport those to Belize. So, I think that from a library standpoint-- I've worked with Edwin Woodeye at the UB library and we've gotten stuff for him, but-- so, from that area. P4

I mentioned the 25,000 books that Colorado State donated through student's work to the library in Belize, some of those books double the holdings in the county. I had at a particular university, they took all the books and took them to the gym at St. John College, and we invited all the librarians in the country to come and take any books they wanted to have, and we gave away 25,000 that way. So it had a big one-time exciting shot of the activities that made it work really well. P5

Both examples demonstrate how COBEC members helped develop curriculum in Belize through the procurement and donation of thousands of books. But perhaps one of the most revealing testimonials to COBEC’s work with libraries was articulated by Participant 11, who revealed:

... our librarians across the country have benefited from a COBEC partnership delivered training. And now the National Library Service is a member of COBEC because of that kind of collaborative.

Taken collectively, participants’ views on library development seem to indicate that COBEC has had a substantive and convincing impact on libraries in Belize. While one may argue that much remains to be done, evidence from the interviews convincingly demonstrates COBEC’s role in helping develop Belize libraries.

Human Resource Development

Human resources development was explained through staff or professional development, the partnership of COBEC and the Association of Tertiary Level Institutions in Belize (ATLIB), seminars, café workshops. Participants addressed the question: To what extent do you believe COBEC has been successful in developing human resources to assist in meeting Belizean needs in higher education?

Professional development

Professional development is an essential process and an integral part of the human resource development function (Webb & Norton, 2013). The International Consortium for Educational Development (2006) defines professional or staff development as programs and activities that

enhance “the professional work of university academics” (para. 1). As reported by Learning Forward—the professional learning association and formally the National Staff Development Council—the revised and now preferred term is ‘professional learning.’ For this evaluation study, however, we chose to stay with professional development, which is a “comprehensive, sustained approach” to improve faculty and staff in higher education (Brancato, 2003; Nicholls, 2014; & Pill, 2005).

The majority of participants cited and explained several instances when COBEC conducted or sponsored staff/professional development workshops, conferences, seminars and related activities. Some reported that professional development was a “big,” important part of COBEC functions. As Participant 1, explained:

Staff development has been a big thing, I think. The CAFE workshops, for example, still going on in Belize. They are a training place. They use Belizeans and U.S. trainers for things: computer skills, all kinds of skills that are becoming a necessity for educational institutions. P1

She continued by explaining:

I think we have what? 40 institutions who've been involved in Belize. That's just a tip of the iceberg. But also, for our faculty it's been a *wonderful staff development* and professional development experience in...our outreach program. Our master's degree program down there was sought after by faculty who really said that it was just an incredible experience for them and enhanced their teaching so much. P1

The extensiveness of COBEC’s work with professional development can be discerned in the experiences of other participants as well:

I think they'll vouch that a university sponsor used to have professional development seminar right before the COBEC meeting for librarians. That was put together by a group of library's science people from COBEC. I didn't participate in it, but I heard all kinds of positive things about what impact that had on the way they would do libraries after that. P5

I don't know the other projects that often, but I know there were a lot of them that were done. I think that was one of the best things that we did. I think the conferences-- first there was more of a concern that we just socialize and talk, but I think people started to use the conferences for professional development. Activities were going on at the conference, so it was more than just getting together with friends. P6

There've been a lot of professional development opportunities where various UNF people, as well as Belizean educators involved in COBEC, have offered to teachers in the country. But I think probably the *greatest, truly the greatest*, how were the graduate opportunities offered Belizean students. So many from, particularly, doctoral degrees that were offered then and through COBEC, as well as master's degrees offered through COBEC. That's had a *tremendous impact* on the development of education in Belize. P7

Participants also talked about the partnership between COBEC and ATLIB; they share the same members. According to Participant 2, ATLIB “became the indigenous counterpart of COBEC” and as such was mostly responsible for CAFÉ workshops and most of the professional development at Belize higher education institutions.

Commenting on a professional development project that included both K-12 and tertiary educators, Participant 4 shared:

I think the project now that _____ and I have going with the _____ school in _____, this allows for us to really work with the faculty. We've already had the team come here. Now we've sent a team down there. We did a workshop when we were just there a couple of weeks ago with all the teachers at the Mayan school. We met with the faculty at the University of Belize... But we will also take students from the University of Belize and put them into our professional development schools here in _____. So, with this, we're going to get a true student exchange, and I think that that way we can be taking a look at our students learning about the culture, learning education in a different system.

But while most participants believed COBEC successfully impacted professional development in Belize, one participant was cautionary about its success. He related: “I don’t think that’s been targeted sufficiently...” (P2). Whether this participant was referring to frequency and quantity of COBEC’s professional development activities is hard to say. What is certain, however, is that the interview evidence shows COBEC’s extensive work with professional development through its member institutions. What is lacking is evidence that documents quality and effectiveness.

Systematic/Comprehensive Planning

Collective/Individual Planning Efforts

We interpreted systematic and comprehensive planning to mean strategic planning, which, according to Bryson (2011), is “a deliberate disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, does, and why it does it” (pp. 7-8). Several participants mentioned planning efforts on the part of Belize and U.S. COBEC members and Belize officials who participated in strategic planning efforts. Participant 4 provided an example:

I know this happens across the way. One, when Santos Mahung was the president at the University of Belize, he contacted Betty Flinchum, Tracy Harrington, Keith Miser, myself, and Jim Murray, and Jim-- he's from Murray State. I can't think of his—Jim McCoy—to serve as a consulting team as they were working and developing their new strategic plan for the university. I felt that this was a good chance for COBEC to work with people from the University of Belize. And Santos had a good approach because he was involving the faculty, he was involving the administration and he was involving outside input from those institutions like UNF, Valdosta, Murray State, Hawaii. And John Peterson didn't come although he was invited but-- these are some of the founders of COBEC that had still been going. P4

Here we see COBEC members and UB's president working jointly with a consulting team to conduct collaborative strategic planning. The collaborative approach, which is the hallmark of effective strategic planning (Bryson, 2011), is highlighted by the president's decision to include faculty, administrative staff, and outside consultants.

Participants also acknowledged that "there's a lot of planning going on in Belize and COBEC has helped, and one of the things was the development of the planning process and the university of Belize" (P5). (This participant shared that he conducted a two-day workshop on strategic planning.). Another shared her knowledge about "an extensive planning and development effort done by Dr. Kemppainen and Dr. Flinchum, and perhaps, others within the administration at the University of Belize at one time" (P7). Although she did not attend, another participant remembered a conference where "an academic somebody" at a COBEC conference "began a strategic planning event for us." She continued by explaining how ATLIB used that planning event to conduct its first strategic planning event that focused on planning "for the development of higher education in Belize" (P10). Both excerpted passages illustrate and verify that individuals associated with COBEC were involved in strategic planning activities.

However, while participants discussed instances where COBEC members individually and collectively engaged in strategic planning and the production of "wonderful planning documents," it seems that for the most part those plans were never implemented, or, if implemented, the implementation process and its results were not apparent. Participants verified this observation, one of whom said that "There have been a lot of documents written and a lot of talk about systematic planning, and more and more administrators in faculty have learned about strategic planning and all those kinds of concepts. But as far as implementation . . . ?" (P2). This perspective was somewhat aligned with that of Participant 5, who after commenting that information from his strategic planning workshop "went into the first strategic plan of UB," revealed that no one could ever find results from planning meetings, workshops, and other related activities.

All told, COBEC members were actively involved in several strategic planning activities. Nevertheless, it seems that few of those activities were noticeably and verifiably implemented.

Question 2: Internationalization: To what extent has COBEC contributed to the internationalization of member institutions?

Internationalization of higher education is a multinational, multifaceted process that involves the interchange of teaching, research, and curricular development between countries. As Knight (2005) observed, it "is the process of integrating international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of higher education" (p. 11). In her extensive review of the research literature on internationalization of higher education, Kehm (2007) identified six themes:

- Mobility of students and academic staff
- Mutual influences of higher education systems on each other,
- Internationalization of the substance of teaching, learning, and research,
- Institutional strategies of internationalization,

- Knowledge transfer,
- Cooperation and competition, and
- National and supra-national policies as regards the international dimension of higher education (p. 264)

Participants in this evaluation study had much to say, directly or indirectly, about how COBEC addressed some of these themes—in particular, mobility of students and faculty through exchanges and study abroad opportunities; mutual influences through linking activities; and cooperation through the development of collaborative linkages—that internationalize higher education in Belize through its programs and activities. As shown in Table 20, their beliefs about COBEC’s successes with the internationalization process are organized and documented below under five categories and ten subcategories, which collectively address the overarching evaluation question and the interview questions.

Table 20

‘Internationalization’ Categories, Subcategories, and Number of Participants

Category	Subcategories	# of Participants
Develop/Strengthen Linkages	Linking/Strengthening activities	10
	COBEC organizational structure/model	5
Promote exchanges	Faculty	6
	Student	6
	Staff	7
Identify financial resources	Scholarships/grants	10
	In-State tuition	8
Encourage study abroad	Faculty, staff, & student	10
Promote understanding between cultures	Cultural events/activities	8
	Student interactions	7

Develop and Strengthen Linkages

The American Council on Education in its publication, “Guidelines for College and University Linkages Aboard,” identified three types of higher education-related linkages: (1) friendship agreements without financial obligations; (2) program-specific linkages that may not have financial obligations; and (3) institutional linkages that commit the college or university to broad-based programs or exchanges (1997). The nature and implications of these linkages were further examined in works by Van de Water, Green, and Koch (2008) and Sutton, Egginton, and Favela (2012). To varying degrees and based on their various cultural settings and individual experiences in COBEC, participants commented on these types of linkages during the interviews.

Table 20 shows the number of participants associated with ‘develop/strengthen linkages.’ The following presentation describes representative excerpted passages associated with each of the subcategories. Because questions Q1 (link post-secondary education) and Q2 (linkages strengthen Belize capabilities) are integrally related, we have merged and addressed them together in the discussion.

Linking/Strengthening Activities

Virtually all participants shared beliefs about ways COBEC has created linkages between member institutions that have strengthened and expanded Belize’s capabilities in higher education. They discussed how U.S. COBEC institutions partnered with Belizean institutions like Stann Creek Ecumenical to develop bulletins and course catalogs. They told of faculty who wrote and published articles together (P1), and highlighted COBEC programs and activities such as articulation agreements with LSU and Wesley Junior College, Murray State and UB, New Mexico State University and Sacred Heart Junior College, and UNF and UB. Also, they mentioned internships, grant projects, study abroad, faculty exchange programs, “lots of workshops,” and library development agreements with COBEC member institutions such as Valdosta State University, UNF, Murray State, Kennesaw State, Colorado State, and New Mexico State. Addressing the question about strengthening and expanding Belize’s capabilities, Participant 2 said:

I think *significantly*. I couldn't put a quantitative answer to that question. But I think institutions in Belize that didn't have connections abroad do now. Smaller U.S. institutions, primarily, who didn't have much going on in other parts of the world, are very linked with Belize now. So, there has been a *significant impact*. And concretely, lots of workshops were done for faculty in Belize. Faculty exchange programs were started with institutions. Library development has been a feature from the beginning, and a lot of library work with librarians going to Belize, and Belize librarians coming up to American institutions.

Relatedly, other participants expanded on how the linkages strengthened and expanded Belize’s capabilities:

I believe that COBEC has been *very effective*, and it grew as an organization to serve U.S. and Belize educational institutions more completely and to move along as its mission has changed and developed and strengthened as it has grown as an organization. P5

Well, I think the linkages with U.S. institutions provided lots of opportunities for, as I said, providing graduate degrees to public institutions to students, who would work and believe in the institution, and the influence of the development of those institutions. It started the same as the one before, really. P7

Probably Participant 8 best captured and represented the group’s perspective on the extent to which linkages have strengthened and expanded Belize’s capabilities when he commented on what he believed to be COBEC’s “main objective:”

Most certainly. As a matter of fact, that was the main objective. To ensure that post-secondary institutions in Belize link up with post-secondary institutions, universities, colleges in the US for the benefit of enhancing our own programs, and the delivery of those programs, as well as to offer opportunities for Belizean students to pursue post-secondary education in the US as well. Especially where there were some special concessions for Belizean students going to the US and the universities. I would say probably hundreds of students have passed through that program, in many areas of the country's development, education, forestry, tourism, you name it... So, in a sense then, COBEC has provided that opportunity to bring all tertiary level institutions together, forming a membership, and exchanging ideas, supporting each other, and to benefit from the technical assistance from U.S. universities. So as a group, they've bonded themselves locally, all the tertiary level institutions.

The bonds developed and shared among Belize institutions are evident and manifested by ATLIB, an association of Belize institutions that include the University of Belize, junior colleges, and private institutions like Galen University. The group meets regularly to conduct professional development workshops, sponsor joint conferences, formulate higher education policies, and work collaboratively with the Ministry of Education to improve access to Belize tertiary institutions. For several participants, COBEC has played a significant role in the association's existence and operations.

In sum, and based on participants' responses, the interview evidence indicates that COBEC established productive linkages between US and COBEC institutions and that it forged those through activities that have strengthened and expanded Belize's capabilities in higher education.

Organizational structure/model

Structure refers to the way functions and operational units are arranged within organizations. According to Burke, (2014), it "signifies levels of responsibility, decision-making authority, and lines of communication and relationships that lead to implementation of the organization's mission, goals and strategy" (p. 232). In COBEC's case, volunteers staff the operational units that consist of co-chairs, a treasurer, a secretary, standing committees, ad hoc committees, and occasional task forces. But note that this arrangement is not consistent with the typical organizational structure common among most non-profit international organizations. In those cases, there are no volunteers, and the structure consists of a board of directors elected by the members. The board, in turn, elects or appoints officers that include a president, a treasurer, and secretary; roles and responsibility are clearly defined, and accountability for project and task completion is high.

Participants expressed their belief that COBEC not only has successfully linked post-secondary education in and outside Belize, but attributed COBEC's success with linking institutions to its organizational structure. They described COBEC's structure as a "model," "an umbrella," and an "effective way" to promote the interest of higher education between small and emergent countries like Belize and larger countries like the United States. According to Participant 3, COBEC "has proven to be a very attractive and effective model for promoting exchanges," and

[it] “can be proud of [its] model of educational development [and] organizational development.” Along the same line, Participant 4 said:

I think that COBEC is a unique model...I do think that somewhere in the future I'm hoping that people will look at the model of COBEC as something that started with just a few people and grew into something that could be replicated throughout the world, particularly in our countries that are looking for a true understanding of culture and diversity.

Participants used other terms to describe COBEC's organizational structure. One said: “I think the most important contribution of COBEC is that it provides a vehicle through which institutions like University of North Florida, and Oklahoma State University, and others to offer graduate programs in Belize...” He added, “I think COBEC provides a way to organize the way different institutions can interact in the United States with institutions in Belize, and fill needs of both parties” (P7).

COBEC's success as a vehicle or model consortium that has linked post-secondary institutions over the years was articulated by Participant 5, who explained:

I think taking into account how difficult it is for an international organization that's really run by volunteers and doesn't have a central office and has a tiny budget, you just think that, that it's so small and the *incredible accomplishments* that COBEC has had over the last 10, 15 years. so, I think it has done a lot. And probably the primary thing is to link post-secondary educational institutions in Belize and in the United States primarily (P5).

So, based on the interview evidence, it appears that COBEC has evolved into a successful consortium with an organizational structure that could serve as a model for linking tertiary institutions that has internationalizing education as part of their mission. Such a model could be emulated in countries seeking “true understanding of culture and diversity,” which is integral to COBEC's purpose and mission.

Faculty, Staff, and Student Exchanges

Table 20 shows the number of participants associated with promoting faculty, student, and staff exchanges. The following excerpted passages present what participants said about each one.

Faculty Exchanges

The literature identified exchanges as methods, techniques, or strategies for sharing knowledge and furthering international understanding (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Helms, 2015; Maringe & Foskett, 2012). Faculty exchange has been one way COBEC internationalized higher education in Belize. Explaining how these exchange activities began, one participant shared:

The first meeting was held there at Murray State where we convened a group of interested parties. Some of whom were like Murray State and like North Florida with current grants at that time. They had a grant to train principals. We had one for faculty

exchange at higher education level. So that was really the first time we had an organizational meeting in Murray State. P2

He continued by explaining the sophistication of Belizean culture, how he fell in love with the country, and then after returning from Africa wrote a grant that funded a faculty exchange activity. He explained:

...it was funded and it was a faculty-exchange activity where we sent faculty members down to Belize over the course of three years. And our primary affiliate at that time was an institution no longer exists - the Belize College of Education. Actually, at that time, it was called BELCAST, Belize College of Arts and Sciences, Arts and Technology. BELCAST was its acronym. P2

Similarly, Participant 10 commented on how Valdosta sent them a “Brown scholar for a long time” and in turn “I sent them [two UCB faculty] to East Carolina.” In the same vein, another participant shared that when he accepted a position at a U.S. institution, “one of the first things people wanted to do was to have COBEC membership and to start producing study abroad and exchange programs with the schools in Belize. And we did that, and they *were so successful* that we had several students every semester be in an exchange” (P5).

But while these comments represent participants’ beliefs and sentiments about faculty exchanges and COBEC’s involvement in faculty exchanges, two Belize participants expressed reservations about COBEC’s successes with this endeavor. Commenting on the limitations of faculty exchanges, Participant 10 asserted:

I think that we should've had some faculty exchange that happened. And the limitation of the faculty exchange has been that when a Belizean faculty member goes to a U.S. institution...[they] never came back. P10

Furthermore, Participant 9, while acknowledging the importance of faculty exchanges, said:

I think it's the faculty exchange, working with a system and a structure that can allow some of our faculty to go and shadow, or you have that faculty exchange where you find somebody that would match your expertise and then you do the exchange. At this moment I think taking people, giving the exposure to our faculty, I think is important. A lot of them have gone to universities to study in their specific area of expertise, but when it comes to delivering and looking at the whole curriculum, I don't know that all of them have the expertise. P9

What these representative excerpts show is that while COBEC successfully engaged in faculty exchanges, some participants believed that COBEC could do more to ensure successful faculty exchanges.

Student exchanges

During its 30-year history, COBEC has promoted student exchanges. However, participants

offered mostly sentiments and few explicit examples about COBEC's work in this area. For example, the following observation from Participant 7 represents the group's belief: "I think it's been *extremely successful* there. I think *large numbers* of Belizeans through various contacts made in COBEC have attended institutions in the United States and at many institutions" (P7). Relatedly, Participant 3 explained:

We formed a [consortium] as a result of an exchanges of young, new faculty members, Belizean education institutions and U.S. institutions in the Western establishment. We printed out a list of people that had become involved with COBEC institutions, with COBEC exchanges, Belizeans, that is. . . I think it's fair to say that *most* Belizeans interested in development in Belize's higher education system *have taken advantage of the opportunity* to find partners in the US and [experienced] mutual benefit on both sides.

In that same vein, Participant 5 explained his experience with student exchange this way:

... one of the first things people wanted to do was to have COBEC membership and to start producing study abroad and exchange programs with the schools in Belize. And we did that, and they *were so successful* that we had several students every semester be in an exchange and study abroad program, primarily with UB, but with other schools in Belize also. And they were *always very successful* and worked out, part of it because of a feeling of commitment and the skills and the interests that our Belize colleagues had. And part of it was the excitement the students from a highly diverse area in _____, going to another place where there were also very multi-cultural and [multi-ethnic] society. So, it certainly provoked an understanding between cultures, but it also really *boosted the interest in study abroad and international exchange programs*. P5

One participant talked futuristically about student exchanges, albeit with Belize K-12 schools. Participant 4, for example, explained his positive experience with a K-12 school exchange program this way:

But we will also take students from the University of Belize and put them into our professional development schools here in _____. So, with this, we're going to get a true student exchange, and I think that that way we can be taking a look at our students learning about the culture, learning education in a different system. And that the Belize education students could be coming here and learning a little bit more about ours, not that one is any better than the other - it's just there are some differences.

Collectively, these excerpted passages reflect COBEC's efforts regarding student exchanges. However, while there may be many concrete examples of student exchanges, participants mostly expressed sentiments about them and gave few examples during the interviews.

Staff exchanges

COBEC's staff exchange endeavors were limited mainly to improving the knowledge and skills of nurses and administrators. Commenting on nurse exchanges, Participant 1 explained:

There's a *great deal of nursing training*. We've actually exchanged nurses and done a lot of training in the nursing field. Especially Valdosta has had an exchange, a nursing exchange. We've done a lot of shadowing for administrators, and we've sent auditors down and received auditors up at UNF to get some training in how to facilitate an audit within a school.

She continued by explaining: “By contrast, their folks coming up to us have provided our auditors, for example, with the knowledge of how a developing country audits its educational organizations. That was very interesting for our people, too, to interact.” When asked about staff and faculty working in Belize, other participants such as P6 explained: “We had a lot of internships in Belize that were developed through contacts that we had made, people we knew. Some I knew . . . I think the other important thing was we had those recruitment nights where we'd meet to talk about the universities.” Another participant likewise articulated that while serving in an administrative role, she was

...able to pick up the phone and call _____ and say, "_____, I'm doing so-and-so" ... because I was struggling with ways to [develop] Sacred Heart Junior College. He got [me] an entire one week visit to UNF where I even sat down in the room and talked with the president of UNF, [who got funding] for me. That's really important. P10

Several participants could not recall specific examples or exact numbers of “students and staff members who participated in exchanges” but remembered that they’ve “had over the years consistent [staff exchanges] in Belize” (P3) or that COBEC has “been *extremely successful*” (P7) with staff exchanges.

Financial Resources and Assistance

Participants’ beliefs about COBEC’s efforts to develop financial resources fell under two subcategories—scholarships/grants and in-state tuition. The discussion with related excerpted passages are below. Financial aid refers to grants, fellowships, scholarships, in-state tuition, student loans, vouchers, and training allowances or assistantships (Fuller, 2014; Long & Riley, 2007).

Scholarships and Grants

As was true with study abroad programs, participants were expressive about COBEC’s efforts to identify financial aid for students. They discussed instances when they engaged in “need-based aid” (Long & Riley, 2007) to help students affiliated with COBEC institutions acquire scholarships and grants to further their education. One participant, for example, described how he was instrumental in working with the director of the Organization of American States to channel scholarship money to COBEC schools:

One thing that did work was through the help of Santos Mahung when he was the Director of Scholarships for the Organization of American States. And I flew to Washington and met with him and presented a paper that I wrote on Belize about how desperate we were for matching scholarship money. And he established a separate

program at OAS for universities that went through the usual OAS process but had some students with some needs left, maybe less than \$10,000 to make it through school. He had set up at the university - the host university offered a matching scholarship, and OAS had paid the rest of the cost of tuition. And we worked with Santos, he was excited to do it, and a big share of that money went to students of COBEC schools. P5

In contrast, while this example shows how financial assistance was acquired for COBEC Belize schools, another participant discussed how he was instrumental in obtaining money for students in COBEC U.S. schools who wanted to study in Belize:

I used a lot of rotary money - money I had in my Rotary Club - to specially assist students that go down to Belize to study for a semester or to go on an internship if that's what they wanted to do. So, we were able to leverage that kind of money from the Rotary Club. We got private money to do that. P6

Other participants revealed how the consortium “created a number of financial resources, particularly for students studying abroad” (P7). This same participant communicated about Florida’s Latin American and Caribbean Scholarship Fund and shared how “we provided a number of scholarships to Belizean students...who were able to attend Florida institutions.” Participant 10, in particular, talked about the UNF/Belize Master’s Degree Program and its relatively low cost to Belizean students:

Those principals got master's degree for 13,000 Belize dollars, complete with text books. That's a *tremendous financial resource*. Those scholarships and-- I coordinated a program in Belize and because they wanted some other reported [inaudible] if they pay me 5,000 U.S. dollars for the summer [inaudible], and I don't think that was a lot of money, but it was an investment on UNF's part to the program. (P10)

However, while participants shared their positive and successful experiences identifying and making financial resources available for students associated with COBEC institutions, they also highlighted difficulties with raising money for scholarship and grants, especially in Belize. For example, Participant 5 commented:

I worked with scholarships, which [were] not quite so successful... there's not a history of giving in Belize, [where] the government gives a tax reduction if you donate something to a public institution or a non-profit. And so, to donate, you're really working much harder at it in Belize than you would in the United States.

Along the same line, the following comment by Participant 10 seems to capture the belief held by some participants:

I think with all of the weaknesses that we have in study abroad and the faculty exchange, the faculty and student exchange - I think it is the financial resources on the Belizean side to make the equivalent commitment. (P10)

While this observation from a Belize participant may reflect a shortcoming on the part of COBEC Belize institutions, nevertheless the majority of participants expressed their belief that COBEC successfully identified scholarships and grants for both Belize and US students affiliated with COBEC institutions.

In-State Tuition/Waivers

Helping students acquire in-state tuition has been another one of COBEC's successful undertakings, especially concerning COBEC's U.S. institutions. U.S. participants shared how students automatically received in-state tuition waivers upon receiving assistantships. Belize participants, in turn, discussed students who, before COBEC, "had some serious financial problems" (P6) and how COBEC was helpful with providing in-state tuition. After explaining how one student started the pre-engineering program at Valdosta State, one Belize participant further shared: "A number of other students did the arts education. They got doctoral degrees in education, some in the sciences, and they did it at a lesser cost due to COBEC" (P8). Then, commenting on what she believed to be a benefit, Participant 11 said:

What I have seen in terms of financial benefit, once a student from Belize registers in one of the COBEC institutions, they have been afforded in-state student status... and that has helped *tremendously*, but it's not like finances dollars pulled in. You're not going to get any money in your hand. And it can only be revealed at that institution in that state, which has helped *tremendously*, like I said.

This explanation further supports COBEC success with helping students acquire in-state tuition. But in addition to in-state tuition, many Belizeans who received in-state tuition also received "soft assistance," which Greene and Storey (2010) defined as "advice and assistance (e.g., mentoring, signposting)" (p. 4). Participant 10, for example, explained how one U.S. COBEC institution worked "one-on-one" with Belizean students and found "housing for them." She further revealed how another student "on the weekend...cleaned people's homes for some of her professors, because she went up with her boarding money and her tuition and some money for food, but [for other expenses] she cleaned houses and got whatever else she needed."

Participants' collective expressions show the positive impact that COBEC's institutions have had with in-state tuitions. Perhaps the impact was best articulated by Participant 1 when she highlighted the number of Belize students who received in-state tuition at one COBEC institution:

I know at UNF, over 500 degrees were given for students living and working in Belize. If you take the number of institutions who have been in COBEC and who've given that same courtesy to the students of in-state tuition, that's *significant* not only in human capital, but in monetary resources invested at Belize by the U.S. . . . Then the institutions themselves, of course, gave the instate tuition to students, which allowed them to have a degree for one third of what it would cost them if they didn't have COBEC scholarships . . . That's *significant* capital.

This statement is corroborated by results from the economic impact study in Part 3. What should

be beyond question then, is that COBEC has been successful with assisting students with finding financial aid, especially with in-state tuition.

Study Abroad

We defined study abroad as opportunities for Belizean students to study at U.S. COBEC institutions and vice versa. This definition is consistent with extant literature on study abroad programs (Murphy, Sahakyan, and Yong-Yi, 2014; Paige et al., 2009; Tarrant et al., 2014). By far, participants were the most forthcoming and expressive while communicating their beliefs about the extent to which COBEC was successful in encouraging study abroad programs in Belize for faculty, staff, and students. Participant 5 articulated the group's sentiment when he commented:

Well, COBEC *has done a great job*. If there's anything they've done really well in, I think it's their study abroad. So that's all-- I guess, and again, I don't have the numbers, but almost every COBEC institution has a study abroad and an exchange program linked to some school in Belize. And the Belize schools are ready, and they're eager, and they could do things to make that happen. P5

He added:

When I accepted the position in ____, one of the first things people wanted to do was to have COBEC membership and to start producing study abroad and exchange programs with the schools in Belize. And we did that, and they were so successful that we had several students every semester be in an exchange and study abroad program, primarily with UB, but with other schools in Belize also. P5

Relatedly, other participants expressed variations on the themes of “done really well” and “great job.” The following three examples represent the group's beliefs and sentiments:

Well, it has a really *tremendous effect* there. Over the last 15-20 years, it has been almost uncountable numbers of students that have gone abroad to study. That's in Belize. There've been a few opportunities also for American students to study in Belize. P7

From the U.S. side, I know the interest in study abroad, the interest in faculty exchanges, the benefits derived from connecting all graduates to further studies, either on the graduate or undergraduate level, I think, it's a *big benefit*. P9

I know, at Sacred Heart they had a study abroad course and it was a requirement that one faculty from Belize work alongside the faculty from the UNF... and they delivered a *very good* package of science education. P11

Noteworthy are participants' use of impact terminology to describe what they believed to be successful study abroad programs: “great job,” “they were so successful,” “I saw a lot of impact,

especially in study abroad,” “very creative study abroad,” “a big benefit,” and “tremendous impact.” But in addition to their near unanimity in their belief about successful study abroad programs, they were clear that these programs occurred at “almost every COBEC institution.” In sum, and based on participants’ descriptions, it is reasonably safe to infer that COBEC member institutions have been highly successful with helping students find and maximize study abroad opportunities. Their success could be due largely to a resolute belief that study abroad opportunities are successful ways of improving higher education in Belize while at the same time internationalizing member institutions.

Promoting Understanding Between Cultures

Culture is an abstract term that means different things to different people. For some people, it “is the way we do things here” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 263). Barth defines it as “the complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organization” (Barth, 2002, para 3). Borrowing from these authors, we defined it as those beliefs, symbols, values, norms, customs, practices, habits, rules, and traditions that are unique to and define a group of people. When asked to explain to what extent they believed COBEC has promoted better understanding between the cultures of Belize and the United States, participants responses fell within two subcategories—cultural events/activities and student interactions. Table 20 depicts the number of participants who shared how COBEC promoted understanding between cultures.

Cultural Events and Activities

Over the years COBEC has promoted and provided numerous opportunities for members to engage with and learn about each other. Study abroad programs, teacher internships, and faculty collaborations have provided numerous opportunities for intercultural experiences. Participants, for example, shared how U.S. journalism students went to Belize to study and wrote newspaper articles and came away with a better understanding of Belizean culture. This participant also talked about “exchange programs in Belize and in the U.S. and [how] the Belizean art had influenced the art teaching” at a U.S. institution (P1). Other participants discussed how successful study abroad and exchange programs between their universities and the schools in Belize provided opportunities for developing understanding between cultures. Participant 5, for example, explained:

The programs were *so successful* that we had several students every semester be in an exchange and study abroad program, primarily with UB, but with other schools in Belize. And they were always *very successful* and worked out, part of it because of a feeling of commitment and the skills and the interests that our Belize colleagues had. And part of it was the excitement the students from a highly diverse area in Hawaii, going to another place where there were also very multi-cultural and [?] society. So, it certainly provoked an understanding between cultures . . . P5

Participants talked about their experiences during each bi-annual conference where the host country conducted cultural activities designed to showcase the country’s unique approach to music, dance, culinary customs, seriocomic and political practices, and leisure and sport

activities. For example, discussing how COBEC Belizeans experienced a baseball game for the first time, one participant shared:

I know when we hosted the COBEC conference here back in 2007, we got tickets to go to the Jacksonville Suns baseball game. So, we all went to see a Jacksonville Suns game and another night we went out on a cruise ship, out into international waters and they could gamble for a little while, not that gambling is a cultural event. I think it was something they did. But I do think that the baseball because—many of them said that that was the first time they had ever been to either a major or minor league baseball game, live. They'd seen a little bit on TV but they're sitting in the grandstands. It was a good game, Jacksonville won the game. The Suns won in the 10th inning on a home run. They thought I planned it that way. P4

Another participant corroborated the baseball game experienced when she said:

I have gone for the July meeting, I have treasured those, because those have given us a chance to be exposed to a lot more of what else there is. I remember attending a baseball game, and oh, that was such a thing. I mean, we watch baseball on television all the time, but to be there is a whole different thing. P11

In addition to the baseball game experience, participants talked about how the bi-annual conferences provided opportunities for learning about and understanding the two cultures. They believed the “U.S. institutions have learned as much from [Belizean] institutions” and that “intercultural love affairs, particularly between the two nations has been *very successful*” (P8). The success of the “inter-cultural love affair” was highlighted during one conference in Dangriga and another in Corozal:

I think they do a fairly good job in the cultural events. I still remember the Dangriga one that Karen Martinez did, down there with the events that we had. She does a *great job*. José Mai did a great job at Corozal. There's always a cultural event attached to the conference itself, and I think that that's important for those who attend. It would be nice—I know there have been discussions of, “Well, can we expand on these in some way?” There certainly is a financial consideration here, because in order to do that, it's going to take a little bit of money, and people or people are going to have to be able to afford it.

Other participants commented on how cultural understanding has developed through “a rich opportunity to learn in a secondary way by doing a project together and in the end in the learning about how each other thinks, and what their perspective is, and how they go about doing things for their university” (P5).

These excerpts demonstrate how COBEC, through different activities, has promoted cultural understanding between Belize and the United States. However, while the majority shared that view, the minority did not. Two Belize participants expressed contrary beliefs:

I don't think so. I think maybe more could be done with the cultural side of things, but I would think that it's there, the ability is there to do more, and maybe at the end of this study we identify room for further [improvement]. P10

I think there's far greater understanding, perhaps of Belizean culture by U.S. members than the other way around. (P11)

These two views suggest that while some COBEC members saw cultural exchange and understanding as successful, others saw opportunities for improvement. This finding is consistent with extant literature (Alvesson, 2013; Gagliardi, 2003) that shows disparate views on promoting understanding between cultures are not restricted to COBEC and participants in this study.

Comparison: The majority of participants believed COBEC has successfully increased international collaboration between member institutions by promoting better understanding through cultural events and activities. However, Belize participants believed more could be done to promote understanding between the cultures, particularly of U.S. culture by Belizeans.

Student Interactions

In addition to events and activities such as baseball games and conference entertainment that promoted “inter-cultural love affairs,” participants believed student contacts and interactions through study abroad, class projects, homestays, and visits have promoted understanding between the two cultures as well. The majority believed large numbers of students had developed intercultural understanding because of their study abroad experiences. Participant 5, for example, discussed how students from a “highly diverse area in Hawaii traveled to another place [that was] also very multicultural . . . “He ended his remarks with this observation: “So, it certainly provoked an understanding between cultures, but it also really boosted the interest in study abroad and international exchange programs.” Similarly, Participant 8 talked about student interaction through international cultural exchange:

We do have situations when our students go to the US through home stays, the university offering visits, excursions to various parts of the U.S., and certainly when the U.S. professors come to Belize, and even students who might want to do their internship here in Belize, do benefit from that cultural exchange. . . . There's lots of exchange, international exchange that occurred.

Other participants talked about courses (e.g., mathematics, ecology) and class projects that facilitated and encouraged student interactions that increased cultural understanding. One participant, for example, reported how he worked with COBEC U.S. partners at Muffles College, UB, St. John’s College, and Sacred Heart College to link U.S. college students with Belize students and faculty in an intense instructional project that provided a rich opportunity for developing cultural understanding. He explained that the project began “at 6:00 morning and ended past midnight.” He continued:

We took our college students and linked them together with the Belize students and Belize faculty. [At] each school, they had a project or activity, or participated in students or faculty. It had, as it was unfolding, you could tell it had an incredible, personal impact on that group of students that we had. And we had a wrap-up seminar the last day. We talked the whole day and it was so intensive that a number of people in the class are crying, but then there hasn't been so much of that and they learn so much about themselves and other people at the program. P5

Other participants shared knowledge about students' interactive and relational experiences that promoted intercultural understanding. For example, students, through a grant from the National Science Foundation, participated in "small-scale projects" during Saturday and Sunday workshops; packed containers with library books and took them to Belize; completed academic projects for courses in "education, forestry, and tourism;" and shared cultural experiences while studying for bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral degrees.

On the whole, it appears that COBEC has promoted and facilitated numerous events and activities for both Belizean and U.S. partners and afforded them opportunities to learn about and understand each culture. In the words of one participant, "These intercultural experiences have "broadened the lives of our students in the U.S. [and Belize] by having an intercultural experience" (P1). One can surmise that students' lives have broadened because, as Murphy-Lejeune (2003) observed, the intercultural experience places them "in a situation where adaptation and transformations are necessary if they are to maximize life in their new conditions" (p. 101).

Question 3: To what extent has COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and internationalized member institutions?

After we examined extant literature, we found no shared definition of capacity strengthening. Consequently, we adopted the definition used by Lusthaus, Adrien, Anderson, and Carden: "Capacity strengthening is an ongoing process by which people and systems, operating within dynamic contexts, enhance their abilities to develop and implement strategies in pursuit of their objectives for increased performance in a sustainable way" (as cited in Lusthaus, Adrien, and Persinger (1999, p. 4). We also adapted the definition of capacity building used by the National Council of Nonprofits, which proffers that capacity building is "whatever is needed to bring a nonprofit [such as COBEC] to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity so it may more effectively and efficiently advance its mission in the future" (www.councilofnonprofits.org).

Participants' answers to Question 6 (COBEC unsuccessful in achieving its goals), Question 11 (COBEC's major challenges and concerns), and Question 12 (recommendations) provided information that addressed strengthening COBEC organizational capacity. As shown in Table 21, the category of 'challenges and recommendations' has four subcategories—revisit goals, recruit more institutional members, improve bi-annual meetings, and increase the use of

technology. Note that all four subcategories are structural, and, if adequately addressed, have the potential to strengthen or build COBEC organizational capacity.

Table 21

'Strengthen Org Capacity' Categories, Subcategories, and Number of Participants

Category	Subcategories	# of Participants
Challenges and Recommendations	Revisit goals	9
	Recruit member institutions	6
	Improve bi-annual meetings	6
	Improve use of technology	4

Revisit Goals

While the majority of participants believed COBEC has achieved most of its goals, they nevertheless expressed the need to revisit and revise them. They overwhelmingly agreed that some of the goals might be obsolete. One participant advised: “Go back to the original goals of the faculty exchanges with research, joint research, student exchanges, study abroad activities. Those were the four original aims of COBEC . . . we have to look at weaknesses and develop those . . .” (P11). Participants further commented on the need for more “partnerships with study abroad programs or internships, or professional leadership training” (P1) as possible new goals to pursue. They also expressed the need to build greater cohesion between member institutions. As Participant 4 explained:

Honestly, I do believe we could be doing a better job. I think that there are some good connections but I still think that they are uniquely institutional. I think that . . . it's UNF working with UB, it's UNF working with St. John's, or it's UNCW working with somebody rather than COBEC. We represent ourselves and present at COBEC in saying, "This is what it is." But we really haven't gelled as COBEC representing everybody. P4

To address the cohesion and other goal-related issues, participants offered several recommendations. They include creating a vision for the future because COBEC “has the potential to create a *significant impact* on education in Belize . . .” (P9); and designating “a governance committee-type person who would be able to look at and keep current with what’s happening, and make recommendations and suggestions as to policy . . . We don't have that now, and I think that allows us to be a little too loose” (P4).

Another recommendation associated with revising goals is to move “towards accreditation for Belize schools” (P1). Participant 2 supported the accreditation recommendation when he commented that “They’ve been hoping for years to get accredited by the equivalent of Gates or SACS.” Additionally, participants expressed the need “to articulate well with the Ministry and with education officers” (P4) and the “need to speed up the rate of teacher training . . . because most of the teachers could not stop working to become full-time students” (P11). Even though

the cost of living is approximately 32% cheaper than in the United States, teachers would still find it challenging to study full time without extensive financial assistance.

Focus on Recruiting more Partner Institutions

Participants believed recruiting new U.S. institutions or partners could help strengthen and build COBEC's organizational capacity. They talked about encouraging "all tertiary level institutions to be part of COBEC so they can benefit from program development, lectures, exchanges, and whatever it is that will take to develop their programs" (8). They also regarded more partnerships as a way to sustain COBEC." One participant shared how she "worked hard in bringing Missouri State University interns to Belize" (P10). Another described "a little group of people who are sort of comfortable with what they are doing..., but it needs to go out beyond that" (P2). He continued: "I mean the Belizean institutions and the American institutions should be ready to do that now. To go out and recruit those other guys and get them in here." Participants also suggested "building a website with information, with contacts on how you can join COBEC" (P9) and posting COBEC's accomplishments in a way that encourages other institutions to join. They believed COBEC has not adequately addressed membership turnover and regarded it as a weakness. As one participant observed:

When a person at an institution who has been the driving force of COBEC at the institution leaves, ...we do not know that there was another person who took over her office, but he [is] nowhere as passionate about COBEC as she was" (P10).

In sum, recruiting new partners emerged as a needed process for building or strengthening COBEC's organizational capacity. Participants seem to assume additional institutions will create a critical mass that propels COBEC's beyond its present position to accomplish much more with professionalizing or addressing higher education needs in Belize and internationalizing its member institutions.

Improve Bi-annual Meetings

Bi-annual meetings should be productive and conducted efficiently within the allotted time. The quality of these meetings emerged as another structural challenge that, according to one participant, "have become a little bit too heavy." They also so many activities are packed into meetings "that we're oversaturated with information." Participant 11's comments represented the group's sentiment when she added:

But sometimes we put too much. So that, by the end of the day, everybody is kind of presentation out. I do think that there might be more to be gained by providing times within the meetings for the very thing that I described as the means to the end. Just chatting, we don't need to structure the whole day. Or we could structure it, so that in this half or this 45 minutes you just meet people. (P11)

Participants also expressed concern about "the chain of knowledge" at meetings being broken because of interrupted or sporadic representation and attendance by member institutions. Participant 5 said: "They come to COBEC meetings, they participate, then the next meeting

another representative comes from that school, and the chain of knowledge is broken . . . COBEC should find ways to have one representative come to all meetings.”

But participants’ concerns were not limited to the bi-annual meetings. They voiced concerns about what occurs or doesn’t occur between meetings as well. They believed, as expressed by Participant 4, “that it cannot be just, ‘Okay, we’re going to go to Belize and have a good time for those two or three days in Belize. And then nothing happens until we meet again someplace in the United States.” One participant suggested an annual COBEC agenda that focuses on issues Belize tertiary institutions should address, and how they should address them, that is, “with collaborative engagements with our COBEC partners” (P9). Participant 4 further commented that COBEC establishes a paid position where an individual would be responsible for keeping “COBEC linked between meetings... and would work with the institutions to plan the meetings and keep us on track and really be someone who would keep the minutes.”

Increase the use of technology

U.S. participants said little about the need to enhance and increase the use of technology as a capacity-strengthening strategy. By far, most comments related to technology came from Belize participants who talked about the need for better use of technology to enhance and deliver exchange programs that address concerns students may have while studying abroad. They see increased use of technology as a way to address the concerns “local institutions have in terms of meeting the required standards to become accredited” (P8). Participants believed COBEC should make greater efforts to connect people from other faculties (e.g., science and technology) and view technology as a “*wonderful opportunity* to make that possible” (P9). They also see technology as “a way to assist teachers whose base salaries don’t go very far to support themselves while studying in the U.S....” (P10). In general, Belize participants believed COBEC should make use of technology to enhance its programs and activities.

Comparison: The majority of comments about the use of technology came from Belize participants, who regard it as a way for COBEC to connect faculties in disparate disciplines and assist students while they study abroad. Perhaps one way of addressing their concern is by familiarizing instructors with online sites that offer a smorgasbord of presentation software, classroom response systems, assessment tools, collaboration tools, visualization tools, and numerous online teaching and learning materials, strategies, techniques, and approaches.

Section 2 Results

Section 2 of the qualitative analysis specifically addresses participants’ responses associated with Question 7 on the questionnaire. We will briefly present findings associated with Question 7a (policies) and 7d (membership) then present what participants considered substantive accomplishments in their responses to Questions 7b (programs) and 7c (activities).

Policies and Membership

In response to Question 7a (policies), participants generally believed the “policies are okay” and do not merit undue attention, especially since “we’ve just recently revised our policies” (P4).

Additionally, and according to P5, “We have enthusiastic, committed people in different leadership roles in COBEC. We don’t want them sitting around writing policies or rules the whole time.”

In response to Question 7d (membership), participants’ comments on the Belizean side were in line with what Participant 3 shared: “When it comes to the membership of the higher education scene in Belize, I think it's fair to say that most Belizeans interested in involvement in development in Belize's higher education system have taken advantage of the opportunity to find partners in the U.S. and [inaudible] the mutual benefit of both sides” (P3). One participant shared that the responsibility of the Belizean membership was to “encourage all tertiary level institutions to be part of COBEC, so that they can benefit from program development, lecture exchange, and whatever it is that will take to develop their programs” P8. Another said outreach and recruitment should apply equally to both Belize and U.S. membership: “I mean the Belizean institutions and the American institutions should be ready to do that now. To go out and recruit those other guys and get them in here” (P2).

Substantive Accomplishments: Programs and Activities

Collaboration and Partnerships

Participants’ responses to Question 7b (programs) and 7c(activities) are synthesized and discussed below. But note that all programs and activities were conducted through collaboration, partnerships, and professional networking. Examples include Participant 9, who noted that among the most substantive accomplishments was “the opportunity it has provided for our own [faculty] at the university to engage in collaboration.” Participant 1 offered: “We were able to start building relationships through departmental activities. I know the social work program was heavily influenced by the institution.” And Participant 11 shared: “. . . we had an observer come down from Louisiana State University that ended up in a partnership with Wesley Junior College.” In fact, collaboration and partnerships seem to be the enabling forces and processes that made COBEC’s accomplishments possible. They undergirded COBEC’s agency and facilitated the development of human capital, in particular, through the success of partnerships, teaching development, study abroad opportunities, and faculty exchanges. So, in short, it is within the context and framework of collaboration and partnerships that other COBEC’s substantive accomplishments evolved and flourished.

Table 22 shows that the category ‘substantive accomplishments’ has five subcategories—graduate opportunities/study abroad, impact on Belize tertiary education, professional development, impact on U.S. tertiary education, and library development.

Advanced Degree Training and Study Abroad

Participants were virtually unanimous in their belief that providing advanced degree training and study abroad were among COBEC’s most substantive accomplishments. One participant shared that “thousands of students have benefited from COBEC attending universities at a reasonable and appropriate cost” (P8). Additionally, and according to Participant 7, COBEC has had “a

tremendous impact on the deployment of education in Belize . . . because it provided so many graduate-trained teachers, principals, and post-secondary institution leaders.”

In addition to advanced degree training, study abroad emerged as one of COBEC’s major accomplishments. As one participant exclaimed: “Thousands have benefited from COBEC’s work with study abroad programs and activities” (P1). They expressed their sentiments with terms and phrases such as “great job,” “truly the greatest,” “important,” and “a wonderful program.” In fact, study abroad emerged as one of COBEC’s major accomplishments and participants regarded it as the most successful and one of COBEC’s reasons for being. Results from the economic impact study in Part 3 corroborated this observation.

Impact on Belize Higher Education

Based on participants’ responses to Question 7 and excerpted examples shown in Table 22, COBEC has undoubtedly impacted Belize tertiary education in positive ways. Participants shared their sentiments with superlatives such as “tremendous impact,” “most important thing,” and “enormous impact.” Moreover, they mentioned specific and different kinds of impacts. For example, “COBEC helped to rationalize delivery of tertiary education” (P8); facilitated initiated and developed articulation agreements between U.S. and Belize institutions; sponsored faculty and student exchanges; facilitated and supported study abroad programs; made it possible for hundreds of Belize students to obtain bachelor degrees, master’s degrees, and doctoral degrees; assisted with library development; printed academic programs and catalogs; and, through its membership, developed and conducted numerous seminars, workshops, and conferences. Another example of COBEC’s impact on Belize tertiary education is reflected in Participant 10’s question: “If we took COBEC out of the picture, . . . how developed would UB be? Would Sacred Heart Junior College and all other junior colleges [be as developed]?” In short, participants’ comments suggest that COBEC has significantly impacted tertiary education in Belize.

Professional Development

We addressed professional development earlier in Section 1 when we documented responses to the overarching theme of professionalization. However, at the risk of being redundant, we briefly mention it here again because a majority of participants regarded it as one of COBEC’s most substantive accomplishments. In fact, participants regard COBEC’s investment in developing human capital as a significant accomplishment. Participant’s 7 observations, for example, represent the group’s belief that “There’ve been a lot of professional development opportunities where various UNF people, as well as Belizean educators involved in COBEC, have offered to teachers in the country.” His observation was corroborated by Participant 1 who expressed that “...for our faculty [the outreach program has] been a *wonderful staff development*, professional development experience... incredible staff development.” Suffice it to say, numerous Belize educators have been beneficiaries of COBEC-sponsored professional development programs and activities. Participant 1 underscored this substantive accomplishment when she observed: “I think Belizean leadership will be impressed with the impact that COBEC has had on the human and leadership potential in Belize, and that has been enhanced by COBEC.”

Impact on U.S. Higher Education

Participants shared their beliefs and sentiments about COBEC's impact on U.S. higher education institutions. The majority commented about how U.S. institutions gained by "having close and warm affiliations with institutions in Belize" (P2). Affiliations developed and were nurtured through consultancies, study abroad programs, faculty and student exchanges, and professional/staff development seminars, workshops, and conferences. Similar to their characterization of COBEC's impact on Belize tertiary education, participants explained their beliefs with statements and phrases such as "benefited enormously," "benefited greatly," and "big benefit." From their perspective, U.S. faculty, students, and staff have benefited from interacting and working with Belizean educators and students just as much as Belizean faculty, students, and staff have benefited from interacting and working with U.S. educators and students.

Library development

As Participant 2 reported, "Library development has been a feature [of COBEC] from the beginning, and a lot of work with librarians going to Belize, and Belize librarians coming up to American universities." Several participants highlighted Valdosta State University and Western Kentucky University's role in developing UCB's library through grants and scholarships that enabled Belizean librarians to study at U.S. institutions and for U.S. librarians to visit Belizean libraries on several occasions and assist with their development. Book donations played a significant role in the development of Belize's libraries because several participants commented on book acquisitions and donations in the U.S. and their subsequent shipment to Belize libraries. Participant 5, for example, cited 25,000 books that were identified and donated to Belizean schools, colleges, and universities. Relatedly, Participant 4 explained how his efforts and the efforts of other individuals and organizations (e.g., U.S. Navy) resulted in 200,000 books COBEC members transported to Belize. Perhaps no excerpted example illustrates COBEC's impact on library development in Belize as well as Participant 11's observation that "The Belize National Library Service and our librarians across the country have benefited from COBEC partnership delivered training."

Professional and Personal Benefits

The final presentation of qualitative results addresses personal and professional benefits, as well as how participants use knowledge and skills derived from their affiliation with COBEC and their participation in its program and activities. The excerpted examples in Table 22 represent their views in these areas.

Professional Benefits

Participants discussed numerous professional benefits derived from their affiliation with COBEC. They talked about their acquaintances and collaborative activities with government officials in the Ministry of Education, with administrators, faculty, students, and staff at Belize universities and junior colleges, with colleagues at U.S. COBEC institutions. Some regard COBEC as "a professional resource they can fall back on" (10) when they need to. One participant said their professional affiliation with COBEC was "one of the best things that I ever

got involved with.” He continued: “I learned as a professional a lot of things about different cultures and priorities and issues in Belize” (P5). Another shared how COBEC helped him build relationships and establish connections that enabled him to assist others who desired joining and participating in COBEC programs and activities. Participants also described their COBEC professional experiences as “invaluable” and “inspirational.” One said, “I feel like going home when I go to Belize.” Another described as highly valuable her ability to “pick up the phone and call” colleagues at COBEC member institutions when the need arose.

Table 22

Substantive Accomplishments with Number of Participants and Excerpted Examples

Categories and Subcategories	# of Participants	Excerpted Examples
COBEC’s most substantive accomplishments		
Collaboration/Partnerships	10	<p>“I think one example mentioned was helping ATLIB to form and to see the need for more collaboration among Belizean institutions.” P1</p> <p>“There's this annual conference that is being held where there is exchange between our local institutions and U.S. institutions.” P8</p> <p>“And I can remember a list being drawn up, these are all the collaborations that have taken place. [They must be a held] in our archive somewhere.” P11</p>
Graduate opportunities and study abroad	10	<p>“Well, COBEC has done a great job. If there's anything they've done really well in, I think it's their study abroad. I don't have the numbers, but almost every COBEC institution has a study abroad and an exchange program linked to some school in Belize.”P5</p> <p>“But problematically, I saw a lot of the impact especially in the study abroad, and providing opportunities for students and faculty to get involved. I saw a lot of that stuff going on.” P6</p> <p>“There've been a lot of professional development opportunities where various UNF people, as well as Belizean educators involved in COBEC, have offered to teachers in the country. But I think probably the greatest, truly the greatest, were the graduate opportunities offered Belizean students.” P7</p>
Impact on Belize tertiary education	9	<p>“I think COBEC came at the time when we were trying to rationalize the delivery of tertiary education in Belize where there was a number of institutions working separately, maybe duplicating programs, or what have you... I would say that's one of the most important thing, rationalizing the delivery of tertiary education in Belize.” (P8)</p> <p>“I think the faculty development for tertiary faculty in Belize. And as a result of that, more higher education development of Belize.” (P10)</p> <p>“So many from, particularly, doctoral degrees that were offered then and through COBEC, as well as master's degrees offered through COBEC. That's had a <i>tremendous impact</i> on the development of education in Belize. Because it provided so many graduate-trained teachers, principals, and post-secondary institution leaders.” (P7)</p>

Table 22 (continued)

Categories and Subcategories	# of Participants	Excerpted Examples
Professional/staff development	8	<p>“I think we have...40 institutions who've been involved in Belize That's just a tip of the iceberg. But also, for our faculty it's been a <i>wonderful staff development</i>, professional development experience in our outreach program.” P1</p> <p>“I'll give a couple of strong ones, one is a very recent one that has happened with COBEC as a session, I think they'll vouch that a university sponsor used to have professional development seminar right before the COBEC meeting for librarians.” P5</p> <p>“There've been a lot of professional development opportunities where various UNF people, as well as Belizean educators involved in COBEC, have offered to teachers in the country.” P7</p>
Impact on U.S. tertiary education	8	<p>“In my view, the most <i>significant</i> was...the human capital, the Investment in the human resources. Of course, the bi-national kind of enhancement that has occurred because of this membership in this organization. The U.S. has benefited enormously in other ways.” (P1)</p> <p>“I think COBEC provides...the way different institutions can interact in the United States with institutions in Belize, and fill needs of both parties. There's no doubt about the fact that our students here in the United States have benefited greatly from interacting with the Belizean students who came to study in the United States.” (P7)</p> <p>“We always talk about what the Belizean Institutions get out of this COBEC arrangement, but frankly, the U.S. institutions get a lot out of it too, because we are a very provincial culture in terms of education and how we look at the world and all of those kinds of things.” (P2)</p> <p>“From the U.S. side, I know the interest in study abroad, the interest in faculty exchanges, the benefits derived from connecting all graduates to further studies, either to at the graduate or undergraduate level, I think, it's a <i>big benefit</i>.” P9</p>
Library development	8	<p>“One of the good things I think with-- well, we didn't have library development at UB. Somebody from---it might have been Western Kentucky---came down and worked quite a bit at the UCB Library, organizing the library and so on. And that would have happened somewhere maybe '91, '92. ... And at UB, at least two librarians got regular scholarships to do a Master's Degree in Library Sciences at Valdosta.” P10</p> <p>“I also think that the work that Valdosta has been doing with the library system down there— this is in between COBEC meetings and I think is <i>very important</i>.” P4</p> <p>“One was we had a library project where we identified 25,000 library books and gave them to the universities in Belize. And I organized a group of students at Colorado State to bring the library books together and pack them all in the shipping container and move them to Belize, and that was really the first big project we worked on.” P5</p>

Personal Benefits

Several participants talked about friends they met and personal relationships they cultivated and developed and the opportunities they had to learn about Belize and U.S. history, culture, and people. They enthusiastically expressed how “wonderful and meaningful” those opportunities were. Furthermore, they regarded their COBEC experiences as “very fulfilling” and their personal development as “enormous.” Participants believed, as portrayed in the words of Participant 2, their “perspective broadened, improved, and made much more tolerant of the way Belize people see the world” (P10). Involvement with COBEC provided numerous travel opportunities, which participants characterized as pure “joy” because it afforded them opportunities to meet and talk with different people. Undoubtedly, then, a fitting inference here is that participants’ COBEC-related personal experiences were not only joyous and fulfilling but substantively meaningful as well. We could infer further that their valuable professional and personal experiences were based wholly, or in part, on involvement with COBEC’s bi-annual conferences, exchange and study abroad programs, and professional development seminars, workshops, and various academic activities.

Use of knowledge and skills

The excerpted examples in Table 23 show various ways participants used knowledge and skills acquired through involvement with COBEC. They included using COBEC “as a model for setting up another program in New Mexico,” applying knowledge to “head up a master’s programs in Belize,” and enhancing cultural competencies and applying them to their teaching. They also used knowledge and skills to “help other people, to make the circle bigger, to bring more people in from other universities” who were not members of COBEC. Additionally, they shared their knowledge and experiences acquired from COBEC workshops and taught others about Belize’s culture and economy. For example, Participant 6 said: “I ran some very creative study abroad programs by incorporating ideas I learnt from COBEC members, adapting them to our own situation.”

Table 23

Professional and Personal Benefits with Number of Participants and Excerpted Examples

Category and Subcategories	# of Participants	Excerpted Examples
Benefits		
Professional Benefits	10	<p>“In my professional life, it's kept me very alert in terms of Mentally . . . And I just think that what it's done is kept me on top of my field, just by being as involved as I am. And it's a good feeling to have people calling me from Belize...” P4</p> <p>“I would say COBEC is one of the best things that I ever got involved with—and I had no idea how great it would be when first worked with our organization to get to be a member of</p>

Table 23 (continued)

Category and Subcategories	# of Participants	Excerpted Examples
Personal Benefits	9	<p>COBEC. I've learned as a professional a lot of things about the different cultures, and priorities, and issues in Belize." P5</p> <p>"I'm down there trying to build relationships. We opened up opportunities later on for when somebody came and wanted to run a program there. We had the connections to get them involved. So that was invaluable to me . . ." P6</p> <p>"I think that I feel inspired, and I'm inspired. It's a professional resource for me that I can fall back on. And personal friendships." P10</p> <p>"I think I became more and more successful in teaching various cultures here in the United States after my experience in Belize . . ." P7</p> <p>"Well, I think from a personal point of view it's been <i>very fulfilling</i>, because I have the role of wanting to reach out. I believe that everyone, no matter where you are, has a right and deserves a right to better themselves in whatever way they can, if it's through formal education." (P4)</p> <p>"I think the other good thing for me was, a lot of times we had evenings and we'd be sit around talking, meeting people . . . That to me was the joy of all this travel that I did . . ." P6</p> <p>"My own personal development has been enormous in that, as is the case always, when one teaches in another country and is in involved in multiple cultures in that country. Their perspectives were broadened, improved, and made much more tolerant of how Belize people see the world." P7</p> <p>"It's been beneficial to me because I could get exposed to challenges that face [inaudible] of Belize in trying to achieve the goals of its people." P3</p>
Use of Knowledge and skills	9	<p>"I've used my expertise to head up master's programs in Belize, to develop master's programs in Belize. That's one example. The others are bringing resources to [my university], the internationalization of the business school curriculum, for example." P1</p> <p>"I used it as a model for setting up another program in New Mexico. For working with all the state universities of New Mexico. I took a lot of the concepts that were developed in COBEC for us to work constantly in the state which had never been done before." P6</p> <p>"I can't say exactly how developing a greater cultural competence, our competencies in teaching and relating translated into my teaching in the United States, but I feel certain that it did. And I couldn't document it empirically. P7</p>

Summary of the Qualitative Study

The qualitative part of the study followed the second half of Creswell's convergent design and focused on qualitative data collection, analysis, and presentation of the results. Members of the study team developed and validated an interview protocol and interviewed 11 participants who answered questions on COBEC's purpose, mission, and the quality of its programs and activities. The study team adhered to applicable standards of program evaluation, carefully observed the principles and criteria for qualitative data collection, treatment, and management, and used Kuckartz's (2014) process of evaluative qualitative text analysis to present the results.

The qualitative results were presented in two sections and followed evaluative guidelines presented in Phase 6 of Kuckartz's model. Section 1 addressed the three overarching questions of the study that focused on the professionalization of higher education in Belize, the internationalization of member institutions, and the strengthening COBEC's organizational capacity. Four categories and seven subcategories organized participants' responses to the professionalization questions, five categories and 11 subcategories organized their responses to the internationalization questions, and one category and four subcategories organized their responses to the organizational capacity questions.

The major ways COBEC professionalized higher education in Belize included collaboration, partnerships, articulation agreements, faculty development, library development, professional development, and collective planning. The data showed that internationalization of higher education occurred mostly through developing linkages inside and outside Belize, facilitating exchanges (faculty, student, staff), identifying and providing financial resources for Belize students (scholarship, grants, and in-state tuition), facilitating study abroad opportunities, and promoting understanding between cultures. Major challenges and recommendations associated with strengthening COBEC's organizational capacity included revising COBEC's goals, recruiting other institutions, improving the bi-annual meetings, improving and expanding the use of technology, and increasing financial assistance.

Section 2 results focused on COBEC's substantive accomplishments, as well as the professional and personal benefits. According to the interviews, COBEC's top three accomplishments were study abroad, its impact on Belizean and U.S. higher education, and the professional development of higher education faculty and staff. Major benefits that accrued to COBEC members were professional and personal in nature. Additionally, members used knowledge and skills derived from involvement with COBEC's programs and activities in myriad ways, for example, teaching others about Belize's culture and economy and establishing graduate programs at Belizean and U.S. institutions.

In Part 5 of the study we will merge and synthesize results from Part Two (quantitative), Part Three (economic impact), and Part Four (qualitative), and discuss convergence, divergence, and discordance evident in the findings. Part Six addresses conclusions and offer evidence-based recommendations for COBEC's consideration.

PART FIVE

INTEGRATION OF RESULTS

In this part of the evaluation we merged results from Parts Two, Three, Four, and the archived projects in Appendix E. We also interpreted and discussed convergence, divergence, and discordance evident in the findings.

The Integration Process

The literature on mixed methods evaluation and empirical studies discusses three levels of integration: design, methods, and interpretation and reporting (e.g., Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). Each level has specific approaches by which integration occurs. For example, at the design level integration can occur through case study, intervention, and convergence. At the methods level integration can occur through the strategies of connecting, building, and merging the two types of data. And at the interpretation and reporting level, integration can occur through narrative weaving, data transformation, and joint displays. We employed the convergent design approach, the merging approach, and the joint display and narrative approaches to interpret and report the results.

The convergent design guides the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, analyze the two data sets separately, merge results for comparison, then interpret the data with convergent and divergent lenses. At the merging level, we used “parallel or similar questions” (Castro et al., 2010, as cited in Fetters et al., 2013) from the survey and interview instruments. The three overarching questions and their accompanying subquestions organized the way we merged the results and sequenced our discussion.

Finally, we used the joint display template suggested by Guetterman, Creswell, & Kuckartz (2015) to facilitate the integration of the survey and interview data. We also used the narrative weaving approach to interpret and report the findings. As Fetters et al. posited, “The weaving approach involves writing both qualitative and quantitative findings together on a theme-by-theme or concept-by-concept basis” (p. 2142). In our case, we chose theme-by-theme and question-by-question approaches.

In addition to COBEC goals and the evaluation questions, the joint display tables show whether the survey and interview results converged, diverged, or were discordant. The tables also show impact indicators (positive or questionable) signifying participants’ composite belief about COBEC impact on various aspects of higher education in Belize and the U.S.

The “fit” of data integration is indicated by instances of confirmation, divergence (expansion), and discordance. According to Fetters et al. (2013), “confirmation occurs when findings from both types of data confirm the results of the other, . . . expansion occurs when the findings from the two sources of data diverge and expand insights of the phenomenon, . . . and discordance occurs if the qualitative and quantitative findings are inconsistent, incongruous, contradict, conflict, or disagree with each other” (pp. 10-11). Consequently, we have organized and

sequenced the following discussion using the qualitative categories and subcategories and noted instances of convergence and confirmation with asterisks color coded **green** in the tables, divergence and expansion with asterisks color coded **blue**, and discordance or inconsistencies with asterisks color coded **red**. In each case, our discussion is preceded by a general overview of the findings from both studies, followed by a discussion of the convergent, divergent, and discordance results.

Finally, differences between Belize and U.S. participants are noted when and where necessary. The absence of discussion on how the two groups responded to a question simply means that there were no discernable differences between them.

Overarching Question 1. To what extent has COBEC professionalized or designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities that address higher education in Belize?

Overview of Findings

Table 24 shows the side-by-side joint display integration of survey and interview results for professionalization. The survey results show that a majority (66%) of participants either strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree that COBEC professionalized education by collaboratively implementing programs and activities that address higher education in Belize.

Specifically, all 35 participants (100%) agreed that COBEC implemented programs that targeted specific professional development needs, 29 or 83% agreed COBEC advanced training for individual faculty, staff, and administrators from Belizean institutions, 29 or 83% agreed that COBEC strengthened collaboration among all COBEC institutions, and 28 (80%) believed that COBEC facilitated articulation agreements between Belize and non-Belizean member institutions. The other programs and activities they agreed to—but not as strongly—were institutional needs related to technology, libraries, and laboratories (74%), curriculum needs (73%), quality assurance initiatives (71%). Fewer survey participants agreed that COBEC pursued an active research agenda (43%), organized a clearinghouse for donations of equipment and educational materials (41%), and formally assessed the impact of scholarship support (26%).

The professionalization survey findings were largely supported by the interview data, which show that most participants believed COBEC has been successful with collaboration and partnerships activities such as articulation agreements, teaching development, library development, professional development, and planning collectively. The interview participants also believed that COBEC engaged in some research development activities and curriculum development but were less certain about the consortium's accomplishments with these activities. Archived evidence in Appendix E supported both the survey and interview findings. A more detailed discussion of convergence, divergence, and discordance in the survey and interview data—and to some degree in the archived projects—follows.

Increase International Collaboration and Partnership

Extent to which participants believe that COBEC has increased international collaboration among member institutions

Results from the survey and interviews show that COBEC successfully professionalized higher education through extensive collaborative and partnership endeavors. In particular, of the fourteen survey questions that addressed COBEC's subgoals associated with developing, designing, and implementing collaborative programs and activities or professionalizing higher education in Belize, the majority of participants agreed that COBEC accomplished 11 or 79% of them. Importantly, the survey participants believed COBEC's strongest impact was on collaboration between Belizean and U.S. institutions. As shown in the survey results, 91% of Belize survey participants and 93% of U.S. participants believed that COBEC strongly or somewhat impacted collaboration between Belizean and U.S. institutions—and 53% of Belize participants and 57% of U.S. participants believed strongly or somewhat strongly that COBEC facilitated collaboration that impacted faculty exchanges. These findings are consistent with and confirming interview results that show 10 of the 11 participants believed that COBEC was successful in increasing international collaboration, particularly as it relates to partnerships like articulation agreements.

Appendix E shows examples of numerous collaboration and partnership projects between COBEC and member institutions. See, for example, Project # 4, where Kennesaw State University, Valdosta State University, Murray State University, and the University of Belize jointly offered summer courses that “explored the history, culture, and biology of Belize.” And see Project #15 where “Colorado State University, University College of Belize, and the Belize Ministry of Natural Resources sponsored an international conference on the Human Dimensions of Natural Resource Management in February 1997 and two hundred natural resource professionals attended.” Additionally, virtually all 39 archived projects reflected some degree of cooperation, partnering, and collaboration between COBEC's individual and organizational members.

COBEC also has increased international collaboration between member institutions through numerous advanced degree training opportunities. As noted in Part 3, economic impact data show that 13 U.S. institutions hosted 1176 students during the last 27 years. Among the 13 institutions, the University of North Florida, University of South Florida, Murray State University, and Valdosta State University accounted for 1104 or 93% of the total.

Facilitate/Strengthen Collaboration in Research, Teaching, Curricular, and Library Development

Extent to which participants believe that COBEC has been successful in facilitating collaboration in research, teaching, curricular and library development

With reference to the interview question that addressed facilitating collaboration in library and teaching development, the majority of interviewees believed that COBEC was successful in achieving those two goals. However, that was not the case for research and curriculum development because fewer than half (five and four, respectively) of the interviewees believed

that COBEC successfully accomplished these two activities. The following discussion addresses the four activities.

Research Development

Results from both data sets converged and reflected the reality that COBEC has not sufficiently facilitated research development. When asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree that COBEC has pursued active research agendas involving Belizean and non-Belizean faculty, administrators, and students, only 14 (41%) survey participants agreed. Similarly, only five of the interview participants believed that COBEC has been successful with facilitating research development. As one participant shared, “I think that we have not tested the waters of research . . . we have not explored research” (P9). The absence of research activity among the 39 archived projects in Appendix E partially corroborates this observation. But in all likelihood, some members conducted research but did not inform the consortium and submit their finished work to the archivist.

Library development

Evidence from this evaluation shows that COBEC formed numerous alliances and partnerships among member institutions. Twenty-six or 74% of survey participants agreed that COBEC addressed institutional resources needs related to libraries. While this statistic reflects only moderate agreement, it nevertheless confirms that COBEC has positively impacted library development in Belize through its collaboration and partnerships and, in doing so, contributed to the professionalization of higher education in that country.

The interview data show that nine of the 11 participants believed these alliances and partnerships (e.g., Valdosta State and UB) made it possible for COBEC to help Belize tertiary institutions develop their libraries, train librarians, and accept thousands of donated books—in some instances shipments of 25,000 and 200,000. In addition to the survey and interview data, archived evidence (Projects #8 and #32) in Appendix E show that COBEC awarded a grant to assist Corozal Junior College with acquiring books, a grant to UB for copying and binding, and sponsored a professional development workshop for library assistants at the University of Belize.

Advanced Degree Training & Teaching Development

The survey data show that 29 (83%) of participants agreed that COBEC provided advanced degree training for faculty, staff, and administration from Belizean institutions. The interview data likewise show that most (8) interviewees believed that of COBEC’s numerous accomplishments, “the greatest, truly the greatest, were the graduate opportunities offered Belizean students.” Relatedly, interview participants (9) also agreed that teaching development was one of COBEC’s most successful endeavors. The majority of interviewees also believed that a number of teaching development programs were shared, or as one interview commented, “We use Belize faculty as much as U.S. faculty” (P1). Another said, “...a lot of collaborative activities have resulted in faculty members of our tertiary institutions, for instance acquiring credits that they have been able to use to their own benefit in pursuing courses...” (P11). In sum, results from both studies show that COBEC successfully facilitated collaborative

partnerships that positively impacted advanced degree training and teaching development.

Program and Curriculum Development

Curriculum development is another activity through which COBEC collaborative partnerships resulted in professionalizing higher education in Belize. But discordance is evident in the results in that twenty-five or 73% of survey participants agreed that COBEC had addressed curriculum needs of all COBEC institutions, while only four of the 11 interview participants believed COBEC successfully facilitated collaboration in program and curriculum development. As one of the three explained: “As we noted before in terms of curriculum development, this was where our local tertiary level institutions work with the U.S. tertiary level institutions to upgrade and enhance the programs that are being delivered in Belize” (P8). Other interview participants were either silent on the topic, or, as in the case of one U.S. participant, expressed uncertainty as to COBEC’s influence on curriculum development. The need for additional work in this area was highlighted by the fact that only three projects (#1, #6, and #10) among the 39 in Appendix E reflect curriculum development activities.

Comprehensive Planning

Extent to which participants believe that COBEC has been successful in implementing systematic and comprehensive planning of educational development efforts

Comprehensive strategic planning is integral to COBEC’s mission and is an activity used to professionalize higher education in Belize. None of the quantitative questions in the survey instrument addressed this activity, which means that the qualitative data expanded the meaning of professionalization to include strategic planning. However, while there is no quantitative evidence on comprehensive planning, the interview evidence shows that COBEC did engage in collective strategic planning activities. One example was when past UB president, Santos Mahung, initiated and facilitated the development of UB’s strategic plan. He worked jointly and collaboratively with faculty, the administrative staff, and an outside consulting team that included COBEC members. Interviewees also commented on individual COBEC members who engaged in and facilitated strategic planning activities. In response to an open-ended question (What would you change about COBEC?), one participant suggested that we “make clear our purpose and that we develop strategic plans and work towards the achievement of goals.”

One drawback to COBEC’s strategic planning initiatives was the lack of evidence that could verify the successful implementation of the plans. As one interviewee (P2) observed, “There have been a lot of documents written and a lot of talk about systematic planning, and more and more administrators and faculty have learned about strategic planning and all those kinds of concepts. But as far as implementation . . . ?” Relatedly, another survey participant said discussions at bi-annual meetings “should be on the achievement of annual and long-term strategic goals and on planning the way forward.” The lack of implementation evidence underscores what some scholars have reported (Bryson, 2011; Falshaw, Glaister, & Tatoglu, 2006). That is, a strategic plan is not effective unless it is faithfully and fully implemented, which seems not to be the case with strategic plans in which COBEC members were involved individually and collectively. Note also that there are no archived projects that address systematic and comprehensive planning.

Table 24

Side-By-Side Joint Display Showing Integration of Survey and Interview Results for Professionalization

COBEC Goal	Evaluation Question	Survey Findings	Interview Findings*	Archived Projects	Impact
Design, develop, and implement collaborative Programs and activities that address higher education needs in Belize	To what extent has COBEC designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities to address Belize’s higher education needs?	<p>Section 2 Primarily through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *professional development 100% *advanced degree training 83% *strengthening collaboration 83% *forging articulation agreements 80% *addressing institutional needs 74% *addressing curriculum development needs 73% *participating in quality assurance initiatives 73% *broadening the base of Belizean institutions 70% *developing programs that address student needs 63% *working with ATLIB to conduct needs assessment 57% *assisting Belize institutions meeting accreditation criteria But not through: *organizing a clearinghouse 46% *pursuing an active research agenda, 43% *assessing the impact of scholarship support 26% 	<p>Questions 3, 5a, 5c, & 5d Primarily through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *collaborative partnerships (10/13) and articulation agreements *teaching development (9/14) *library development (9/15) * professional development (8/11) *advanced degree training (8/11) *strategic planning (6/11) <p>But less so through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *research development (5/5) *curriculum development (4/5) 	Projects 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 3-19, 21-22, 26 -27, 29 -39	Positive

***Note:** The two numbers next to the interview findings represent the number of participants and their text segments with weighted values of 2 or 3.
Key: *Represents convergence and confirmation *Represents divergence and expansion *Represents discordance and inconsistency

Overarching Question 2. To what extent has COBEC contributed to the internationalization of member institutions?

Overview of Findings

As we mentioned in Part 4, the literature identifies several themes associated with internationalizing higher education. In addition to the six themes by Khem (2007), three others by Marginson and Van der Wende (2007) merit attention because they further help define and clarify the higher education internationalizing process:

- Knowledge creation through education and technology transfer
- Knowledge transfer through education and human resources development, and
- Cultural and community development . . . (p. 11)

To varying degrees, these themes collectively reflect parts of COBEC's purpose and mission since its inception. As measured by the survey instrument, and as shown in Table 5 in Part 2, and Table 25, they are reflected specifically in COBEC internationalization goals represented by the five categories and in the levels of agreement indicated by survey participants. First, 28 or 79% of participants agreed that COBEC has developed programs and processes to increase the number and effectiveness of academic exchange of students, faculty, and staff. Second, 24 or 69% agreed that COBEC has identified and developed resources of financial aid for Belizean students studying in non-Belizean member institutions. Third, 27 or 77% agreed that COBEC has organized study abroad programs, service learning opportunities, and internship experiences for students. And fourth, only 15 or 43% agreed that COBEC has developed curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions. These findings show that while the consortium has been moderately effective in accomplishing the first and third goals, it needs to work on improving the second and fourth. Additionally, the survey results show that of Marginson and Van der Wende's (2007) three themes, COBEC's internationalizing activities have directly or indirectly created and transferred knowledge through education and human resource development.

The interview data, on the other hand, show that Marginson and Van der Wende's (2007) three themes are reflected in activities that developed linkages, promoted exchanges, identified financial aid in the form of scholarships and in-state tuition, encouraged study abroad, and promoted understanding between cultures. The following discussion summarizes the salient aspects of participants' beliefs and sentiments associated with these activities.

Develop/Strengthen Linkages

Extent to which participants believed COBEC has linked post-secondary education institutions in Belize and outside Belize

The majority of participants indicated their agreement with academic exchange of students, faculty, and staff (79%), developed sources of financial aid (69%), and organized study abroad programs (77%). These activities created and strengthened linkages between COBEC's institutions and internationalized higher education in Belize. A minority (43%), however, agreed that COBEC has developed curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean

institutions on aspects of Belizean culture, history, and society. This goal is worth pursuing because curriculum and co-curriculum development at non-Belizean institutions can create institutional change (Bond, 2003); teach leadership and facilitate communication and collaboration (Buschlen & Guthrie, 2014), enhance student learning (Wankel & Wankel, 2016); promote growth in social maturity (Bakar & Esa, 2017; Elias & Drea, 2013), and develop knowledge and agency about social justice issues (Craven, 2012).

Relatedly, the interview data show COBEC successfully engaged in programs and activities that resulted in productive linkages between member institutions. Participants believed these activities included partnerships to develop bulletins and course catalogs, publish articles, write grants, facilitate study abroad opportunities, and enable faculty and student exchanges. Linking activities have, in the words of one participant, “significantly impacted higher education in Belize.” They have also strengthened and expanded Belize’s capabilities in higher education by empowering Belizeans to become more efficient while performing their academic duties and responsibilities.

However, interview participants’ beliefs and sentiments about COBEC’s success with linking activities were not limited to the above achievements. They also attributed COBEC’s success to its organizational structure. An organization’s structure refers to the way it functions and the way its operational units are arranged and “signify levels of responsibility, decision-making authority, and lines of communication and relationships that lead to implementation of the organization’s mission, goals, and strategy” (Burke, 2014, p. 232). COBEC’s structure is partially comprised of the following elements, their accompanying duties and responsibilities, and their relationships: co-chairs, co-treasurers, co-secretaries, standing committees, task forces, and reciprocal bi-annual conferences. To describe the uniqueness of COBEC’s organizational structure, participants used terms such as “a model,” “vehicle,” and “umbrella organization.” These terms, according to one participant, “provides a way to organize the way different institutions can interact in the United States with institutions in Belize and fill the needs of both parties.” These findings are important because they may reflect a discrepancy between members who believe COBEC needs to restructure with a secretariat and members who believe the consortium’s structure is serving its intended purpose. Nevertheless, the latter group is in the minority and makes establishing a secretariat conceivable.

Faculty, Staff, and Student Exchanges

Extent to which participants believe COBEC has been successful in promoting faculty, staff and student exchanges among member institutions

The next way COBEC internationalized higher education in Belize was through faculty, staff, and student exchanges. Table 25 shows confirming evidence from the two data sets. The survey data show that 28 (79%) agreed that COBEC has developed programs and processes to increase the number and effectiveness of academic exchange of students, faculty, and staff of COBEC member institutions. The majority of interview participants agreed COBEC successfully promoted faculty, student, and staff exchanges. They cited Murray State University and Valdosta University as two U.S. institutions that facilitated and coordinated faculty exchanges with the University of Belize. Participants also talked about COBEC’s work with promoting student and staff exchanges. They expressed strong sentiments (“extremely successful,” “were so

successful”) about student exchanges between Belize and U.S. institutions. They also cited successful exchanges with Valdosta and UNF but did not recall the number of students and staff who participated.

Financial Aid

Extent to which participants believe COBEC has been successful in developing or providing financial aid for students

The next approach COBEC used to internationalize tertiary education in Belize was to identify and provide financial assistance for students. Here too the interview data confirms the survey data. The survey results show that 24 or 69% of participants agreed that COBEC has identified and developed sources of financial aid for Belizean students studying at non-Belizean institutions. Additionally, in an open-ended response, one survey participant commented on the “need for funding students who wish to travel abroad.”

The interview results highlighted sources of financial aid such as scholarships and in-state tuition or tuition vouchers. Several participants related their involvement with helping students acquire scholarships and assistantships. Sources of scholarships included, among others, the Organization of American States, the Florida Latin American Scholarship Fund, and the UNF/Belize Master’s Program.

Helping students acquire financial assistance through scholarships and grants was not an easy endeavor, as participants related. Several talked about the difficulties associated with securing scholarships, especially in Belize, where, as one participant explained, “there’s not a history of giving . . . where the government allows a tax deduction if you donate something to a public institution or a non-profit.” For the most part, COBEC has internationalized higher education through assisting students in Belize with financial resources, but has done so mainly through its U.S. member institutions. One U.S. institution helped over 300 students acquire degrees through in-state tuition and waivers.

The interview evidence supports our contention that COBEC has been highly successful with internationalizing tertiary education in Belize through financial aid strategies such as scholarships, grants, and in-state tuition. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that COBEC U.S. institutions have provided a disproportionate portion of financial assistance to Belizean students. This fact suggests that while Belizean institutions may not be as financially well-off as U.S. institutions, they nevertheless need to do more to help their students defray higher education costs—if even by allowing tax deductions for donations to non-profit educational organizations.

Study Abroad

Extent to which COBEC encouraged study abroad program in Belize for faculty, staff, and students

The survey data show that 77% of respondents agreed that COBEC has organized study abroad programs, service learning opportunities, and internship experiences for students from both Belizean and non-Belizean member institutions. When we compared the views of Belize and U.S. participants, both survey and interview participants believed COBEC strongly or somewhat

strongly impacted study abroad. Nonetheless, fewer Belize participants (72% vs. 85%) believed COBEC strongly or somewhat strongly impacted study abroad.

The interview evidence confirmed the survey results and showed that most participants (10) believed study abroad was among COBEC's significant accomplishments. In fact, no other goal, mission statement, or activity received as many superlatives (e.g., "great job," "a big benefit," and "tremendous impact") as did study abroad. As one participant indicated, "If there's anything they've done well in, I think it's their study abroad." While most participants did not recall the number of students who participated in study abroad programs, noteworthy are the 13 U.S. institutions identified in the economic impact study in Part 3 that have hosted Belizean students for tertiary learning opportunities.

Table 25 shows some key findings from the economic impact analysis in Part 3 of the study. It is interesting to note that the economic impact findings corroborate results from both the survey and interview studies. Using the language and categories from the economic report, COBEC's programs and activities have created *obvious impacts* and *less obvious impact*, influenced *direct expenditures and indirect expenditures*, and have *induced expenditures*. We discussed examples of these impacts earlier in Part 3. However, what stands out from among these different impacts is the sample study abroad economic impact model. At the risk of being redundant, the model shows the estimated cost of a four-week study abroad is \$2,992USD, and of that amount \$600USD stays in the U.S. and \$2,392USD is spent in Belize. Now, if those figures are multiplied by x number of students attending x number of institutions, it becomes clear that COBEC's success with study abroad has significantly impacted Belize and U.S. institutions and communities—both quantitatively and qualitatively and precisely what the survey and interview results show. Additional examples of COBEC's study abroad activities are documented in the archived data in Appendix E, notably Project 4 (Tropical Ecology), Project 5 (SUNY Cortland, et al.) Project 20 (Valdosta State Student Teacher Program), Project 23 (Valdosta State nursing students), and Project 24 (Valdosta State summer field school).

Promote Understanding Between Cultures

To what extent do you think COBEC has promoted better understanding between cultures?

The final way COBEC contributed to the internationalization of member institutions was by promoting understanding between cultures. It goes beyond saying that Belize and the United States have distinctively different cultures and their distinctiveness are reflected in their socioeconomic, political, and educational systems, including their system of higher education. Promoting understanding means learning and building intercultural knowledge and skills, and building "meaningful, substantive engagement between students and faculty of different cultures" (Helms, 2015, p. 23). We thus can infer that promoting understanding between cultures means advancing or furthering knowledge and awareness of the idiosyncrasies and nuances between beliefs, values, norms, customs, traditions, and practices unique to Belize and the United States.

The survey data displayed in Part 2, Table 4 show that of the four goals on internationalizing of member institutions, only 15 or 43% of the respondents agreed that COBEC has developed curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions on aspects of

Belizean culture, history, and society. The interview participants did not comment on COBEC's work with developing curricular and col-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions. And among the archived data in Appendix E, only the tropical ecology project (#4) between the University of Belize and four U.S. institutions conducted courses that explicitly explored the "history, culture, and biology of Belize," but not the history and culture of Belize within the context of U.S. institutions' curricular and co-curricular programs. Accordingly, discordance occurred between the survey and interview data and between the survey and archived data. These inconsistencies suggest that COBEC needs to work harder to accomplish this goal.

While the interviewees did not comment on curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions, they nevertheless reported that COBEC promoted better understanding between Belize and U.S. cultures by jointly engaging in myriad cultural events and by facilitating student interactions. In particular, interview participants shared knowledge about COBEC-sponsored activities where host institutions during bi-annual meetings provided opportunities for attendees to learn about cultural traditions and customs. Belize participants, for example, shared about cultural lessons learned while attending a baseball game in Jacksonville, Florida, and conversely U.S. participants talked about cultural lessons learned during the Dangriga and Corozal meetings in Belize.

Participants also reported how study aboard and exchange programs provided opportunities for meaningful student interactions that resulted in shared learning about both cultures. One U.S. participant, for example, explained how he worked with Corozal Junior College, Muffles College, UB, St. Johns, and Sacred Heart to link his college students together with Belize students and Belize faculty. He explained, "At each school, they had a project or activity, or participated with students or faculty . . . And they learn so much about themselves and other people at the program" (P5). Other student interactions that increased cultural understanding included what one participant described as the influence of Belizean art-on-art instruction at UNF and journalism students who engaged with Belizean students to collaboratively write newspaper articles. In the words of the participant, the intercultural experiences "have broadened the lives of our students in the U.S. [and Belize] by having an intercultural experience."

Table 25

Side-By-Side Joint Display Showing Integration of Survey and Interview Results for Internationalization

COBEC Goal	Evaluation Question	Survey Findings	Interview Findings*	Economic Impact Data And Archived Projects	Impact
Contribute to the internationalization of member institutions that address higher	How has COBEC contributed to the internationalization of member institutions?	<p>Sections 2, 3, & 5 Primarily through: *academic exchange of student faculty and staff programs 79% *organizing study abroad 77% *identifying and developing sources of financial aid for students 69% But not through: *developing curricular and co-curricular programs 43%</p>	<p>Questions 1, 2, 4,5b, 5c, 5g Primarily through: *study abroad (10/16) *-scholarships (10/13) *linking activities (10/9) *in-state tuition (8/10) *cultural events (8/8) *student interactions (7/9) *student exchange (7/6) *staff exchange (7/6) *faculty exchange (6/9) *organizational structure (5/8)</p>	Project examples 3, 4, 5, 20, 23, 24	Positive

*Note: The two numbers next to the interview findings represent the number of participants and their text segments with weighted values of 2 or 3. Key: *Represents convergence and confirmation *Represents divergence and expansion *Represents discordance and inconsistency

Overarching Question 3: To what extent has COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and internationalized member institutions?**Overview of Findings**

Of the three main goals, strengthening organizational capacity emerged as needing the most attention. On average, fewer participants agreed with the subquestions that defined this goal. As shown in Table 26, the three activities with which most survey respondents agreed were establishing and maintaining a program for archiving COBEC materials (77%), developing effective communicating tools (74%), and achieving a broader geographic and national representation among non-Belizean members (66%). Two items with a modest percentage of agreement were increasing the number of two-year institutions among the non-Belizean membership (57%) and generating interest and investment in COBEC and non-Belizean institutions (57%).

The three items on which the smallest percentage of participants agreed were implementing a strategy for obtaining grant funding to support COBEC projects in Belize (43%), creating a COBEC secretariat to provide administrative support for COBEC activities (31%), and initiating a center or institute to serve as a facilitating entity for COBEC activities (20%). In other words, while COBEC was less effective with achieving its third overarching goal of strengthening its organizational capacity, from the participants' perspectives, it was particularly ineffective relative to these three activities.

The interview data addressing strengthen organizational capacity were derived from three questions on the interview questionnaire: Question 6: To what extent do you believe COBEC has been unsuccessful in achieving its goals? Question 11: What would you identify as COBEC's major challenges and concerns? And Question 12: What suggestions or recommendations would you make to address these challenges and concerns? The results show that COBEC needs to revisit its goals, recruit more member institutions, improve its bi-annual meetings, and increase the use of technology to serve faculty, staff, and students better. A summary follows.

Table 26

Side-By-Side Joint Display Showing Integration of Survey and Interview Results for Strengthen Organizational Capacity

COBEC Goal	Evaluation Question	Survey Findings	Interview Findings*	Archived Projects	Impact
Strengthen the organizational capacity of COBEC as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and international member institutions.	To what extent has COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and internationalizing member institutions?	<p>Sections 1, 2, 4, & 5 Primarily through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *a program for archiving COBEC’s materials 77% *effective communication and marketing tools 74% *national representation among non-Belizean numbers 66% *increased number of two-year institutions among non-Belizean membership 57% *generating interest and investment in COBEC and non-Belizean institutions 57% <p>But not through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *implementing a strategy for obtaining grant funding to support COBEC projects in Belize 43% *creating a COBEC secretariat 31% *initiating a center or institute to facilitate entry for COBEC activities 20% 	<p>Questions 6, 11, and 12 COBEC needs to address the following challenges and recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *revisit goals (9/9) *recruit more-member institutions *improve bi-annual meetings (6/ 7) *increase the use of technology (4/5). 	-----	Questionable

*Note: The two numbers in parentheses next to the interview findings represent the number of participants and their text segments with weighted values of 2 or 3.

First Group of Related Ancillary Questions Challenges and Recommendations

*To what extent do you believe COBEC has been unsuccessful in achieving its goals?
What would you identify as COBEC's major challenges and concerns?
What suggestions or recommendations would you make to address these challenges and concerns?*

Revisit Goals

The three organizational capacity goals on which a minority of survey participants agreed were obtaining grant funding (43%), creating a secretariat (31%), and establishing a center or institute (20%) as COBEC's top challenges. These are all divergent activities addressed by a minority of survey respondents, but not by interview participants. However, interview participants discussed other challenges and made several recommendations related to strengthening COBEC's organizational capacity.

First, the majority of interviewees (nine of 11 or 82%) believed COBEC should revisit and revise goals that may be obsolete. Other participants believed COBEC should go back to the four original goals—faculty exchanges with research, joint research, student exchanges, and study abroad. They also commented on the need to focus more on internships and professional leadership training. But these findings were at odds with the survey data in Section 1 of the questionnaire, which show that a substantial number of participants was satisfied with the clarity and practical nature of COBEC's goals (86%), its purpose (89%), and its mission (92%). One explanation for the discrepancy could be the difference between the age of survey participants (25 to 55 years.) versus the age of interview participants (55 years and older). The difference could also be attributed to differences in longevity with COBEC because the majority (87%) of survey participants were COBEC members between one and 16 years, and 10 of the 11 interview participants were members 20 or more years. In other words, longevity and age may have influenced each group's perspective of COBEC's goals, which in turn influenced the way they answered each question.

The interview results show that the need for greater cohesion between member institutions emerged as a challenge, which participants believed COBEC could address by developing and implementing a clear vision that links needs to COBEC's collaborative and partnering activities. Cohesion between member institutions, they believed, could be achieved by designating someone like "a governance committee type person" to coordinate COBEC's activities during the entire year and to recommend policies for the consortium to formulate and implement. Note that this finding is in accord with survey results, which show a relatively small percentage of participants who agreed that COBEC has created a secretariat (31%) and initiated a center or institute to facilitate COBEC's activities (20%).

Several participants mentioned assisting UB with achieving accreditation as another goal for the consortium to pursue. They explained that UB's accreditation has been a concern for many years. This finding was partly supported by the survey data that show a slight majority of respondents

(18 or 53%) agreed that COBEC has assisted Belizean institutions in meeting accreditation criteria. As one interview participant acknowledged, “UB’s administration and faculty have been hoping for years to get accredited by the equivalent of Gates and SACS” (P2). Another shared that “At UB we are not working towards accreditation to any of the U.S. body, but the Ministry of Education has just launched a whole thrust towards the National Accreditation Council. And I believe we will start from there” (P9). Naturally, assisting with UB’s accreditation could mean developing other collaborative relationships between COBEC institutions and other tertiary institutions in Belize.

Recruit Member Institutions

The second challenge that—if addressed correctly—could strengthen COBEC organizational capacity was what interviewees believed was a relatively small number of member institutions. Some interview participants believed recruiting more institutions could be “a way to sustain COBEC.” Others believed more institutions could move the consortium beyond its comfort zone and revitalize its membership. From the perspective of the survey data, this recommendation seems accurate, as only a modest majority (57%) of participants agreed that COBEC has broadened the base of Belizean institutions, and only a moderate majority (66%) agreed COBEC has achieved a wider geographic and national representation among non-Belizean members. On the whole, participants’ collective view supports a recruitment campaign or an outreach program aimed at increasing COBEC’s institutional membership.

Improve Bi-annual Meetings

In Section 1 of the survey instrument, participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the quality of the summer and winter conferences. A convincing majority (89%) indicated they were satisfied. This finding conflicts with the interview results which show that a majority of interviewees (six of 11 or 55%) registered concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the bi-annual meetings. As one participant put it, “We’re oversaturated with information . . . and by the end of the day everybody is kind of *presentation out*.” Participants recommended not scheduling the whole day, but allowing more time for meet and greet, exploring ways to ensure the “chain of knowledge” established by each member institution is unbroken yet represented at each bi-annual conference, and developing an annual agenda with prioritized issues and concerns. One participant suggested establishing “a paid position where an individual would be responsible for keeping COBEC linked between meetings,” a recommendation consistent with the low percentage (31%) of survey respondents who agreed COBEC has created a secretariat to provide administrative support for COBEC activities. Whether these measures will improve the quality of the winter and summer conferences is anyone’s guess. What is certain though, is that well-planned, productive bi-annual meetings could be excellent opportunities to strengthen COBEC’s organizational capacity.

Increase the Use of Technology

In Section 2 of the survey questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with Item 3: COBEC has addressed institutional resource needs related to technology, libraries, and laboratories. According to Belizean participants, technology refers to course

delivery platforms such as Blackboard, Canvas, or Google Hangout. The results show that 25 or 74 % believed COBEC has achieved this goal. But note that since there was no way to know whether survey participants' agreement focused solely on technology, libraries, or laboratories—or whether participants apportioned their agreement evenly, proportionately, or disproportionately—we inferred disproportionate assignment and interpreted the result to mean that more participants agreed relative to libraries but fewer relative to technology and laboratories. This interpretation is consistent with the interview findings that show more participants commented on library development than they did on technology and laboratory development. Since there were no other technology-related questions on the survey questionnaire, we relied on results from Item 3 to indicate the strength of participants' agreement and relied on the interview results to provide the nature of their agreement and belief.

The interview questionnaire did not ask whether COBEC has addressed institutional resources needs related to technology, but rather (a) whether participants believed COBEC has been unsuccessful in achieving its goals, (b) what they would identify as COBEC's major challenges and concerns, and (c) what suggestions or recommendations they would make to address the challenges and concerns. After we examined responses to these questions, we found that no U.S. participant commented on technology or offered suggestions and recommendations related to it. In contrast, the seemingly incomplete and unsatisfactory use of technology were concerns held by three of the four Belizean participants. They recommended COBEC improve the use of technology and maximize its capabilities to deliver exchange programs and address accreditation concerns of Belize institutions. One Belizean participant explained it this way:

I know there's a whole era of technology, and the extent to which technology can be used to enhance exchange, even to deliver certain programs. I think that would be an excellent opportunity for COBEC to investigate and to assist our local institutions. In other words, technology can help with exchange of programs, curriculum, even addressing student concerns, if any, whilst they're studying abroad, or any concerns our local institutions have in terms of meeting the required standards to become accredited. (P8)

Another Belizean participant explained that COBEC could use technology to connect faculties from disparate disciplines such as science and technology. Thus, at least from Belizean participants' perspective, it seems there is a need for COBEC to make better use of using existing technology to assist Belize tertiary institutions with curriculum development, faculty exchange, student exchange, course delivery, and addressing students' concerns while studying aboard.

Second Group of Related Ancillary Questions Substantive Accomplishments

Since its inception, what would you identify as COBEC's most substantive accomplishments relative to policies? Relative to programs? Relative to activities? Relative to membership/individuals?

Table 27 summarizes the findings that answer these questions. To identify COBEC's most substantial accomplishments among the survey findings, we examined all six sections of the questionnaire and adapted Cohen's (McHugh, 2012) interpretation of agreement levels where above 90% represents an almost perfect agreement, 80% - 90% represents a strong agreement, 60% - 79% represents a moderate agreement, 59% and below represents a weak agreement. In each case, we selected the items with 80 percent agreement or higher (a minimum of 28 of 35 participants). As shown in the table, 11 (26%) of the 43 items in the questionnaire met this criterion. Among the 11 items, eight with the highest number of participant agreement were professional development (100%), strengthening collaboration among all COBEC institutions (93%), writing a clear and realistic mission statement (92%), writing a clear and realistic purpose statement (89%), conducting quality programs and activities (89%), writing clear and realistic goals (86%), and sponsoring and facilitating study abroad programs (85%). Note that while no item on the survey specifically addressed COBEC's accomplishments relative to policies, a significant majority of survey participants were very satisfied or satisfied that COBEC has a clear and realistic mission statement (92%), and clear and realistic goals (93%).

In Part 4, Section 2 we discussed what the interview participants identified as COBEC's substantial accomplishments. The six headings under which we summarized them were collaborations and partnerships, advanced degree training and study abroad, impact on Belize tertiary education, professional development, impact on U.S. tertiary education, and developing libraries. As depicted in Table 27, convergence occurred in *implementing programs that target professional development needs, increasing and strengthening collaboration, sponsoring providing study abroad programs, and providing advanced degree training*. In other words, the interview results confirmed four of the ten activities that survey chose as COBEC's most substantial accomplishments.

However, divergence occurred between the survey and interview results relative to COBEC's *impact on Belize tertiary education, impact on U.S. tertiary education, and library development*. This result means that insights into these two substantive accomplishments could be addressed either by explaining the difference between the survey and interview findings or by describing their complementary aspects (Fetters et al., 2013). Of the two approaches, the complementary approach seems the most logical because, upon examination of all the survey findings and the convergent and discordant interview findings depicted in Table 27, they all could be classified as COBEC's positive impact on Belize tertiary education or its positive impact on U.S. tertiary education. In other ways, all the activities depicted in the table were ways COBEC either impacted Belize higher education or impacted U.S. higher education.

Table 27

Side-By-Side Joint Display Showing Integration of Survey and Interview Results for Substantive Accomplishments

COBEC Goals	Evaluation Question	Survey Findings	Interview Findings	Achieved Evidence
Professionalized higher needs in Belize, contribute to the internationalization of member institutions, strengthen its organizational capacity	What were COBEC’s most substantive accomplishments?	<p>Sections 1 - 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Implementing programs that target specific prof. development needs 100% *strengthening collaboration among all COBEC institutions 93% *writing a clear and realistic and realistic mission statement 92% *conducting quality summer and winter programs and activities 89% *writing a clear and realistic purpose statement 89% *writing clear and realistic goals 86% *sponsoring and facilitating study abroad programs 85% *providing advance degree training 83% *forging articulation agreements 80% *developing programs and processes that increase the number and effectiveness of academic exchange of students, faculty, and staff of member institutions 80% 	<p>Question 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increased/strengthen int’l collaboration (10) *provide graduate education and study abroad opportunities (10) *positive impact on Belize tertiary education (9) *professional development (8) *positive impact on U.S. tertiary education *development of Belize libraries 	Projects 1- 4, 9, 13-19, 21-21, 26-27, 29-31, 33-39

Key: *Represents convergence and confirmation *Represents divergence and expansion *Represents discordance and inconsistency

Third Group of Related Ancillary Questions Positive, Negative, and Personal Impacts

What were (or are) the most positive aspects of COBEC for you? What were (or are) the most negative aspects? How have you been impacted as a result of participating in COBEC's programs and activities? How have you used the information knowledge and skills gained through your participation in COBEC?

Positive Aspects of COBEC

Table 28 shows the integration of survey and interview results for the positive and negative aspects of COBEC, and the professional and personal benefits participants say they derived from their involvement with COBEC. Two open-ended questions in the survey asked participants to explain the most positive and most negative aspects of COBEC. The results are synthesized in Part 2 of the study. The results show that participants' positive experiences included access to information, expertise, and professional development opportunities (e.g., CAFE workshops), and exposure to cutting-edge issues related to education, technology, and information sources. Their positive experiences also included opportunities to collaborate and establish productive partnerships.

Negative Aspects of COBEC

The only discordant results concerned survey participants' response to the question: What were the most negative aspects of COBEC for you? Results show that survey participants' major concerns fell into two categories—improvements concerning the bi-annual conferences, and concerns about collaboration and the work of the consortium. Regarding the bi-annual conferences, participants believed a need exists for a substantive meeting agenda, that the meetings are too short and not focused on planned goals, and that more time is needed for more information and discussion of best practices. On the other hand, their views on the work of the consortium included their belief that more funds are needed to accomplish the consortium's work; the need for more pro-active, timely, and multi-lateral collaboration; a need to review periodically the organization's goals and objectives; and the need for a secretariat to manage the consortium's affairs.

How Impacted as a Result of Participating in COBEC

The interview results posed two related questions on how participants were impacted as a result of participating in COBEC's programs and activities, and how participants used the knowledge and skills gained through participating in COBEC. The results show that participants benefited both professionally and personally. Professional benefits included opportunities for collaboration, opportunities to use COBEC as a professional resource, and opportunities to improve instructional practices with lessons learned from COBEC. Personal benefits included opportunities to travel, opportunities to broaden perspectives, and opportunities to learn about Belize and U.S. history, culture, and people.

Use of Knowledge and Skills

The results show that participants gleaned ideas from COBEC members, and, in the words of one participant, “We adapted them to our own situation.” Participants also viewed COBEC as a model and thus used it as an exemplar to improve and develop their academic programs. As one participant shared: “I used it as a model for setting up another program in New Mexico. For working with all the state universities of New Mexico, I took a lot of the concepts that were developed in COBEC for us to work constantly in the state—which had never been done before.”

In sum—and notwithstanding the seemingly divergent and discordant results—COBEC has positively impacted the professional and personal lives of its members, and, in that regard, has undoubtedly contributed to the professionalization and internationalization of higher education of its member institutions, especially those in Belize.

Table 28

Side-By-Side Joint Display Showing Integration of Survey and Interview Results for Positive and Negative and Positive Aspects of COBEC, and Professional and Personal Benefits

COBEC Goals	Evaluation Question	Survey Findings	Interview Findings
Professionalized higher ed. needs in Belize, contribute to the internationalization of member institutions, strengthen its organizational capacity	What were (are) the most positive and and negative aspects of COBEC for you? How have you been impacted as a result of participating in COBEC’s programs and activities? How have you used the used the information knowledge and skills gained through your participation in COBEC?	<p>Section 6, Questions 3 & 4 <u>Positive:</u> Access to information, expertise, and professional development; opportunities to collaborate; partnerships that support Belize pursuit of higher education abroad. <u>Negative:</u> Bi-annual conference, collaborations, and the work of consortium needs improvement</p>	<p>Questions 8 & 9 Professional benefits (e.g., opportunities for collaboration, making connections); personal benefits (e.g., opportunities to travel and meet new friends, learn about Belize and U.S. culture, history, and people, and broaden perspective); and use of information and knowledge (e.g., to enhance cultural competencies and applying them to their teaching, adapting ideas from COBEC and applying them to other study aboard programs)</p>

Summary of Part 5

Part 5 focused on integration of results from Parts 2, 3, and 4 of the study, and archived programs and projects. After a brief introduction, we explained the integration process and distinguished between levels of integration, interpretation, reporting, and their respective approaches. We explained that we chose the convergent, merging, joint display, and narrative approaches to interpret and report the results. Following discussion of the integration process, we applied the integration parameters and guidelines to the three overarching questions and groups of related subquestions.

The first overarching question addressed professionalization of higher education in Belize. The integrated results show positive convergence and confirmation occurred on most of COBEC's professionalization activities, most notably professional development, advance degree training, strengthening collaboration among institutions, forging articulation agreements, and addressing institutional needs through library development. On the other hand, negative convergence occurred on pursuing an active research agenda. Divergent or expansion activities included participating in quality assurance initiatives, organizing a clearinghouse for COBEC materials, assessing the impact of scholarship support, and implementing systematic and comprehensive strategic planning. Addressing curriculum development needs was the only discordant or conflicting activity, which occurred because a majority (73%) of survey participants responded to the question favorably, while a minority (4 of 11 or 36%) of interviewees shared positive experiences with curriculum development.

The second overarching question addressed COBEC's impact on the internationalization of its member institutions. The results show that COBEC largely internationalized member institutions through faculty, staff, and student exchanges; organizing study abroad programs; and identifying and developing sources of financial aid such as scholarships and in-state tuition. The two divergent activities were developing curricular and co-curricular programs and student interactions, and two discordant or inconsistent activities were cultural events and organizational structure.

The third overarching question addressed the extent to which COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity. Of COBEC's three overarching tasks or goals, participants believed this one needed the most improvement, particularly in view of the survey impact results that show participants believed COBEC was more successful with accomplishing its professionalization and internationalization goals than it was with accomplishing its strengthening organizational capacity goal. The activities with which the smallest percentage of participants responded favorably were raising funds to support COBEC's work, creating a secretariat to provide administrative support for COBEC activities, and initiating a center or institute to serve as a facilitating entity for COBEC activities. A notable convergent activity was to recruit more member institutions, or, as identified in the survey results, increase the number of two-year institutions among the non-Belizean membership. Two discordant activities identified by interview participants but not assessed by survey participants were revisit COBECs goals and improve bi-annual meetings.

Part 5 of the study also addressed participants' responses to groups of related ancillary questions organized under three headings: Challenges and Recommendations; Substantive Accomplishments; and Positive, Negative, and Personal Impacts. Concerning challenges and recommendations, discordance occurred with revisiting and revising COBEC's goals and the bi-annual meetings, divergence occurred on increasing the use of technology, and discordance occurred on improving bi-annual meetings. The most substantive accomplishments were:

- implementing programs that target professional development needs (compellingly corroborated by the by archived projects in Appendix E),
- increasing and strengthening collaboration among member institutions,
- organizing study abroad programs, (corroborated by the economic study in Part 3), and
- providing advanced degree training.

Finally, while positive aspects of the consortium included access to information and opportunities to collaborate, negative aspects included the shortness and unfocused nature of the biannual meetings and the need for more time to discuss best practices. Professional benefits included opportunities for collaboration and making connections, and personal benefits included opportunities to travel and about the history, culture, and people of Belize and the U.S.

In the final part of the study, Part 6, we summarized the findings and offered recommendations and conclusions for COBEC's consideration.

PART SIX

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Methodology

The purposes of the evaluative study were to (a) document and evaluate COBEC’s activities and outcomes in Belize and the United States, (b) examine the impact of COBEC on Belizean and U.S. higher education institutions and the country of Belize, and (c) identify opportunities for further engagement that could expand the impact of the consortium. The evaluation team addressed these three purposes by collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data to answer three questions:

1. To what extent has COBEC professionalized or designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities that address higher education in Belize?
2. To what extent has COBEC contributed to the internationalization of member institutions?
3. To what extent has COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and the internationalized member institutions?

The three questions were derived from COBEC’s three overarching goals, which are clarified and elaborated through 26 subgoals—14 for professionalization, four for internationalization, and eight for strengthening organizational capacity. Because “there’s no typical Consortium . . . and no right way to evaluate consortia” (Whittaker, 1993, p. 208), we adapted a normative approach while conducting the evaluation, and adhered to the evaluation principles and standards that the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation articulated (Yarborough et al., 2011.). We then used Creswell’s mixed-method convergent design to frame the overall evaluation. For the quantitative part, we used a survey design and administered a questionnaire to all 70 COBEC members, 36 of whom returned the instrument—a return rate of 51%.

To adhere to the qualitative portion of the design, we collected data on the views and beliefs of 11 COBEC members. We also conducted an economic impact study and described the results in Part Three. Where appropriate, we referred to archived documents to support the survey and interview results. In addition to collecting data on COBEC’s economic impact, we measured the overall impact by (a) calculating the average combined percentage of survey respondents who responded favorably to or agreed with the subgoals associated with professionalization, internationalization, and strengthening organizational capacity, (b) calculating the number and percentage of participants who believed that COBEC has accomplished its subgoals successfully since its inception in 1988, and (c) analyzing the comments from interview participants who either confirmed, expanded, or contradicted the survey evidence. Finally, we used several narrative strategies to merge the results from the survey, economic impact study, and interviews. In the sections that follow, we provide a summary of the major findings and related conclusions, provide recommendations, discuss limitations, and present our general conclusions.

Major Findings

Overarching Question 1: To what extent has COBEC professionalized or designed, developed, and implemented programs and activities that address higher education in Belize?

Major Finding P1. Professional development was a major activity that COBEC used to professionalize or address higher education needs in Belize. All survey respondents agreed that the consortium has implemented programs and activities targeting the specific professional development needs of higher education faculty, staff, and administrators, and a majority of interview participants described professional development as a “big” accomplishment, implemented mostly through workshops, conferences, and seminars as well as collaborative work with ATLIB. Both Belizean and U.S. members took advantage of and benefited from a diverse assortment of professional learning opportunities presented by COBEC members.

Major Finding P2. A significant percentage of participants identified graduate degree training for individual faculty, staff, and administrators as collaborative activities that improve higher education in Belize. In the words of one participant:

[COBEC] provides a vehicle through which institutions like University of North Florida, and Oklahoma State University, and others offer graduate programs in Belize, and in those graduate programs were many of the leaders of Belizean post-secondary institutions and in the ministry of education.

This observation was corroborated by the results of the economic impact study, which found that, since COBEC’s inception, 13 COBEC U.S. institutions have hosted 1,176 students who have completed master’s and doctoral degrees in disparate fields of study, including business, agriculture, computer science, the physical and social sciences, and education. Many of these students have returned to Belize and are using their professional knowledge and skills to enhance growth and development in Belize’s public and private sectors.

Major Finding P3. COBEC has increased and strengthened collaboration among member institutions through partnerships and linking activities that include articulation agreements among member institutions. Examples of collaborative partnerships include Murray State and the University of Belize, New Mexico State University and Sacred Heart Junior College, University of North Florida and Sacred Heart Junior College, and the University of North Florida and the University of Belize. Virtually all programs and activities that COBEC members developed and facilitated were conducted collaboratively. In fact, collaboration and partnerships were the main activities that facilitated the execution of all other activities.

Major Finding P4. Activities that had a majority, but moderate agreement regarding their effectiveness (60–79%) included addressing institutional resource needs related to technology, libraries, and laboratories; participating in the development of quality assurance programs for Belizean institutions; broadening the base of Belizean institutions; and developing programs that address student needs relative to academic advisement and student support services. Because the

strength of agreement among respondents was average or less than average for these activities, the data suggest that much room for improvement exists for each activity.

Major Finding P5. The survey results revealed that a majority of the respondents agreed that COBEC has addressed institutional needs relative to technology, libraries, and laboratories. Further, the interview results indicated that COBEC has addressed library resources by forming alliances and partnerships that trained librarians and facilitated book donations—in one case 25,000 and, in another, 200,000. The consortium has also facilitated collaboration through teaching and library development agreements with member institutions, such as Valdosta State University, the University of North Florida, Murray State, Kennesaw State University, Colorado State University, and New Mexico State University. Participants believed that these activities resulted in limited successes and that the consortium was less successful with the following:

- pursuing an active research agenda
- organizing a clearinghouse for donations of equipment and educational materials
- assessing the impact of scholarship support

These three activities had the lowest or weakest agreement among the survey respondents, and, therefore, merit serious attention by COBEC.

Professionalization Conclusions

Conclusion P1. As displayed in the findings from the economic impact study and from the quantitative and qualitative studies, COBEC has definitely addressed higher education needs in Belize. The economic impact study revealed that 13 U.S. institutions hosted 1,176 Belizean students for higher education degrees. A majority of the survey respondents responded favorably (agreed) to 11 of 14 (86%) of the professionalization subgoals, and a majority of the interview participants confirmed the remaining six subgoals. Member institutions have enhanced the knowledge and skills of Belize's human capital and have strengthened the capability of COBEC institutions in their delivery of higher education.

Conclusion P2. The main collaborative programs and activities were professional development, advanced degree training, and the forging of articulation agreements.

Conclusion P3. COBEC has been moderately successful in developing quality assurance initiatives. The consortium, however, still needs to make a concerted effort to assist member institutions with developing and executing effective quality assurance programs.

Conclusion P4. The consortium has had a positive impact on library development in Belize, primarily through librarian training and thousands of book donations.

Conclusion P5. COBEC has not adequately addressed the goal of organizing a clearinghouse for donations of equipment and educational materials, pursuing a research agenda, or assessing the impact of scholarship support.

Conclusion P6. Although COBEC members have engaged in strategic planning over the years, systematic and comprehensive planning has not been among the activities that COBEC has recurrently used to address higher education needs in Belize. Moreover, implementing and promoting strategic plans have not been integral parts of the consortium's operations.

Professionalization Recommendations

Recommendation P1. COBEC should continue its extensive professional development activities for higher education faculty, students, and staff, including planning joint professional learning initiative projects with ATLIB and other tertiary entities in Belize. The consortium's professional development activities, however, lack evidence that shows the quality and effectiveness of professional development workshops and seminars. Consequently, professional development presenters need to evaluate and document their presentations as well as submit evaluation documents to the individuals responsible for archiving COBEC's materials. In addition, the consortium needs to continue to provide graduate degree education opportunities for Belizean faculty, staff, and administrators.

Recommendation P2. The consortium needs to continue the work of addressing institutional resource needs related to libraries, technology, and laboratories. Qualitative evidence, however, indicates that COBEC has been more successful in developing libraries through book donations and librarian training than by developing technology and laboratories. Therefore, the consortium needs to identify deficiencies related to technology and laboratories and to determine how best to assist Belize member institutions with addressing their deficiencies. Perhaps instructors should be encouraged to use resources such as those offered on the Southern Methodist University's site titled "Using Technology to Enhance Technology and Learning": <https://www.smu.edu/Provost/CTE/Resources/Technology>.

Recommendation P3. COBEC should identify member institutions with curriculum development needs and develop collaborative and partnered initiatives to improve each institution's curriculum. Although the survey data indicated that COBEC has been moderately successful in addressing the curriculum needs of all of its member institutions, the interview data indicated otherwise.

Recommendation P4. The consortium needs to increase its efforts to ensure that student needs related to academic advising and support services are adequately addressed, as only 63% of the survey respondents said they believed COBEC has achieved this goal.

Recommendation P5. COBEC should determine whether it still needs a clearinghouse for donations of equipment and educational materials. If so, a committee should be formed to decide when and where the clearinghouse should be established and what kinds of equipment and educational materials will be collected and archived in the clearinghouse. The committee also needs to be tasked with the responsibility of developing a plan to identify donors and to solicit the desired equipment and educational materials.

Recommendation P6. The consortium needs to develop and execute a practical plan for assisting Belizean institutions in becoming accredited and be resolute about its implementation,

particularly because accreditation will help Belize tertiary institutions to maximize their capabilities. The plan should include best-practice techniques and their applications to each institution's quality assurance initiative. For example, see Nicholson (2011) and Quinn, Lemay, Larsen, and Johnson (2009).

Recommendation P7. COBEC should develop and pursue a viable research agenda and encourage and support the development of more collaborative grants and research publications. Pursuing an active research agenda is of the utmost importance because data and results from empirical studies could be used to support and advance the work of the consortium. Furthermore, the higher education consortia literature has repeatedly identified knowledge creation and knowledge transfer as key reasons for improving higher education (Altbach & Seaman, 2007; Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter, 2015; Flora & Hirt, 2010; Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Knight, 2005; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009). In addition, COBEC needs to continue to work collaboratively with ATLIB to design and conduct needs assessments for the purpose of identifying issues and challenges that impede institutional and academic progress. Then, these entities need to work collaboratively to address them.

Recommendation P8. Member institutions should continue to collaborate to achieve the consortium's goals and objectives. COBEC also needs to continue to forge articulation agreements by identifying and engaging member institutions that have not participated in the process and seek their participation.

Recommendation P9. COBEC needs to decide whether it still wishes to formally assess the impact of scholarship support by non-Belizean institutions on the achievement of staff development goals at Belizean institutions. If the consortium wants to conduct such assessments it should develop functional plans and implement them.

Ancillary Professionalization Recommendations

Recommendation P10. The consortium should adapt recurrent strategic planning as an activity designed to improve higher education in Belize, publicize the plan via its website, and be resolute about its implementation.

Recommendation P11. COBEC needs to review and adapt the "what works" approach professional development (Gusky & Yoon, 2009) and consider reviewing and adapting the models of Brancato (2003), Dysart and Weckerle (2015), Pill (2005), Zuber-Skerritt (2013), and Zuber-Skerritt, Fletcher, and Kearney (2015).

Recommendation P12. Examine evaluation approaches and methods (e.g., Coryell, Durodoye, Wright, Pate, & Nguyen, 2012), and conduct a more extensive and inclusive evaluation of its impact on higher education in Belize and the United States.

Overarching Question 2: To what extent has COBEC contributed to the internationalization of member institutions?**Internationalization Major Findings**

Major Finding I1. The survey and interview results confirmed that COBEC has successfully developed processes and programs aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the academic exchanges of students, faculty, and staff. A respectable 79% of the survey respondents agreed that COBEC has accomplished this goal, which a majority of interview participants confirmed. Faculty exchanges have been conducted between East Carolina University and the University of Belize, Murray State University and the University of Belize, and Valdosta State University and various Belize institutions. Staff exchanges, which the interview participants characterized as being “extremely successful,” have focused primarily on improving the knowledge and skills of nurses and administrators. Likewise, student exchanges between the United States and Belize institutions have been “extremely successful.”

Major Finding I2. COBEC has successfully identified and developed financial assistance for Belizean students who study at non-Belizean institutions. Consortium members have assisted students in overcoming financial challenges by identifying and guiding students to various sources of financial assistance. Examples of these sources include the Organization of American States, a Rotary Club, the Florida Latin American Scholarship Fund, and the University of North Florida Belize Master’s Program. Hundreds of students have received scholarships, grants, in-state tuition, and vouchers. These sources have made it possible for students to complete their studies and obtain their degrees. Nevertheless, more needs to be done, or, as one interview participant asserted, “I think we should spend more time on trying to raise money for scholarships for Belize students to be able to go to school.”

Major Finding I3. Evidence from the survey, interview, archived documents, and economic impact study have revealed that COBEC’s success with study-abroad activities has had a significant impact on higher education in both Belize and the United States. In fact, COBEC’s organizing and facilitating of study-abroad opportunities for Belize and U.S. students are among the consortium’s most substantial accomplishments. Economic impact data indicated that the estimated cost of a four-week study abroad experience was approximately \$2,922USD, and, of that amount, \$600USD stayed in the United States and \$2,392USD or \$4,784BZD was spent in Belize. For the 1,176 documented students who took advantage of COBEC-sponsored financial aid opportunities, \$718,800USD enhanced the U.S. economy, and \$2,865,615USD or \$5,731,232BZD enhanced the Belize economy. When the results from the survey and interview data are taken into consideration, what emerges is a reasonable conclusion that COBEC, primarily through U.S. member institutions, has had a significant impact on students’ access to higher education through study-abroad opportunities. Furthermore, COBEC has positively impacted both the Belizean economy and the U.S. economy.

Major Finding I4. Of the four subgoals comprising COBEC’s international undertakings, what requires the most attention—at least from the survey respondents’ perspective—is developing curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions, especially on Belizean culture, history, and society, and by using professional resources available from Belize

member institutions. The survey findings revealed minimal agreement on items regarding curricular and co-curricular programs at non-Belizean institutions when it comes to culture, history, and society. However, the interview findings revealed that host institutions in both Belize and the United States conducted cultural events and activities (e.g., collaborative class projects, student exchanges, home visits). These activities, however, were not part of a curricular and co-curricular development initiative. This result was confirmed by interview findings indicating that a majority of participants offered no evidence to support COBEC's success in curriculum development at either Belizean or non-Belizean institutions.

Internationalization Conclusions

Conclusion I1. COBEC has successfully contributed to the internationalization of member institutions. The economic, survey, and interview data substantiated the extent of the contributions. The economic impact study documented the financial impact on both the U.S. economy and Belize community, and the survey and interview findings confirmed that COBEC has accomplished three of the four subgoals—the academic exchanges of faculty, students, and staff; organizing study-abroad programs; and identifying and developing sources of financial aid for students.

Conclusion I2. COBEC has successfully developed or provided a variety of financial aid that has supported students during their academic engagement.

Conclusion I3. Its study abroad efforts are among COBEC's significant accomplishments. Thirteen U.S. institutions have hosted Belizean study abroad students, and no other activity received as many superlatives from respondents.

Conclusion I4. COBEC has not been successful in developing curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions in the areas of culture, history, and society. In addition, the consortium has not been successful in using the professional resources available through Belizean member institutions. Infusing non-Belizean curricula and co-curricula with lessons on Belize culture, history, and society could help U.S. institutions and students to learn from and about Belize as much as Belize institutions and students learn from and about the United States.

Conclusion I5. COBEC has promoted understanding between Belize and U.S. cultures by jointly engaging in myriad cultural events and by facilitating student interactions.

Internationalization Recommendations

Recommendation I1. The consortium needs to continue to support exchanges among member institutions. The findings indicated that faculty, student, and staff exchanges are among its successful accomplishments.

Recommendation I2. Evidence shows that COBEC has been successful in identifying and developing sources of financial assistance for Belizean students to further their education at non-Belizean institutions. Nevertheless, more needs to be done, especially among Belizean tertiary

institutions, so that students who lack the necessary financial support to pursue their dreams may access affordable higher education. COBEC should continue to raise funds for scholarships and grants, and it should encourage Belize HEIs to increase their commitment to funding for their programs and activities.

Recommendation I3. The consortium should continue to provide study abroad opportunities for Belizean and non-Belizean students as well as design and conduct empirical studies focusing on students' study abroad experiences.

Recommendation I4. COBEC should decide whether the goal of developing curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions in the areas of Belizean culture, history, and society is still essential to the consortium, and if so to pursue it. If not, COBEC needs to revise or delete it from among its internationalization goals. It should be noted, however, that the collaborative use of professional resources from Belizean institutions at U.S. member institutions could further strengthen existing institutional partnerships, create new ones, and in the process broaden COBEC's influence and international affiliations. In turn, partnerships could become stronger by "understanding context, building [trusting] relationships, evaluating effectiveness, and assisting locals" (Hickey, Achtem, & Nuner, 2012, p. 52). These elements should be present to facilitate substantive change and to reduce the risk of conflict stemming from the absence of cultural awareness.

Ancillary Internationalization Recommendations

Recommendation I1. Examine the model of international education partnership, Teach for a Better Belize (TFABB), documented in a study by Hickey et al. (2012). The authors detailed how teachers in the Toledo district of Belize became teacher-practitioners and improved instruction and learning in their schools through collaborative partnerships.

Recommendation I2. The consortium should review the rationales, standards, and strategies in the relevant literature and use them to examine and streamline COBEC's professionalization and internationalization goals. Updegorve (2006) presented useful guidelines for forming a successful consortium; Altbach and Knight (2007) and Knight (2005) presented national- and institutional-level rationales and models for internationalizing higher education; and Helms (2015) discussed standards and practices for international higher partnerships. Knight's generic model is perhaps among the most useful because it contains rationales, approaches, and strategies for internationalizing higher education.

Overarching Question 3: To what extent has COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and internationalized member institutions?

Strengthening Capacity Major Findings

Major Finding S1. COBEC was not as successful in strengthening its organizational capacity as it was in professionalizing higher education in Belize and in internationalizing its member institutions. On average, a significantly smaller percentage of respondents agreed that COBEC

has strengthened its organizational capacity (54%) compared with the percentage who agreed that it has professionalized higher education in Belize (66%) and contributed to the internationalization of member institutions (67%). Moreover, the respondents believed that COBEC has completed a substantially higher percentage of its professionalization goals (86%) and internationalization goals (75%) than its strengthening capacity goals (63%). Quite revealing is the fact that weak or minimal agreement was found on five of the strengthening capacity goals compared to weak or minimal agreement on three professionalization goals and one internationalization goal. Overall, however, the respondents said they believe, if only moderately so, that COBEC strengthened its organizational capacity through the following activities:

- establishing and maintaining a program for archiving materials
- developing effective communicating and marketing tools, including a website and brochure to increase the visibility of COBEC among tertiary-level institutions and interested constituencies beyond the COBEC membership
- achieving a broader geographic and national representation among non-Belizean members
- increasing the number of two-year institutions among the non-Belizean members
- generating additional interest and investment in COBEC in Belize with each non-Belizean institution

Major Finding S2. Participants believed that COBEC has been far less successful in the following:

- designing and implementing a strategy for obtaining grant funding to support COBEC projects in Belize
- creating a secretariat to provide administrative support for COBEC's activities
- initiating a center or institute to serve as a facilitating entity for COBEC activities.

Major Finding S3. Conflicting findings were found with regards to revisiting and examining the consortium's goals. Although a majority (86%) of the survey respondents was satisfied with the clarity and realistic nature of COBEC's goals, a majority (9/11) of interview participants believed that the consortium should revisit some of the goals. Three examples are the following:

- assisting the University of Belize and other Belizean institutions with achieving accreditation
- broadening the base of Belizean institutions engaged in COBEC-sponsored activities
- achieving a broader geographic and national representation among non-Belizean members

Major Finding S4. Conflicting results were found relative to the biannual meetings. Although 89% of the survey respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the meetings, a majority (6/11) of the interview respondents was less satisfied and expressed concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the meetings. Some interviewees said they believe that more time should be provided for meet-and-greets and less time spent listening to presentations and reports. As one

participant stated, “We’re oversaturated with information . . . and, by the end of the day, everybody is kind of presentation-ed out.”

Strengthening Organizational Capacity Conclusions

Conclusion S1. Of the three overarching goals, strengthening organizational capacity registered the lowest percentage of agreement among the survey respondents. Therefore, the consortium needs to revisit the subgoals and develop viable plans for implementing them, especially the three with the lowest levels of agreement among participants—obtaining grant funding, creating a secretariat, and creating a center or institute to facilitate COBEC activities.

Conclusion S2. COBEC has not pursued its goal of designing and implementing a strategy for obtaining grant funding as a capacity-strengthening strategy. Notably, grants are not stable or reliable forms of income, and grantors tend to favor organizations that are financially stable (Sargeant & Jay, 2014), a position COBEC has not attained. Instead, the consortium would be better served by focusing on the broader field of fundraising (which includes grantsmanship), which is more likely to produce reliable and sustainable sources of funds.

Conclusion S3. COBEC should build its capacity by establishing a secretariat, a permanent administrative office responsible for administering and supervising the consortium’s affairs. Some scholars view secretariats as “overlap management” or mere functionaries of an organization or state (Jinnah & Young, 2014). The principal functions of a consortium secretariat include project management, governance, policy, administration, and finance. During COBEC’s Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 conferences, members in attendance identified the need for a secretariat as a significant concern. The findings from this evaluation substantiate this belief and underscore the reality that COBEC is at a juncture where a secretariat is needed to plan, organize, coordinate, and shepherd its administrative and operational affairs.

Conclusion S4. The goal of initiating a center or institute to serve as a facilitating entity for COBEC activities has not been addressed adequately.

Conclusion S5. It is essential for the consortium to continually work toward well-planned, productive biannual meetings that contribute to strengthening its organizational capacity.

Strengthening Capacity Recommendations

Recommendation S1. COBEC needs to design and implement a strategy for obtaining grant funding to support its projects in Belize. It must appoint and authorize a committee to develop and implement a robust fundraising program that identifies and solicits funds from multiple sources for its programs and activities. Among the approaches should be a “basket of committed donors” on whose largesse the organization can rely. An all-inclusive approach to fundraising is an appropriate path to follow because, as one professional fundraising organization characterized it, “In the world of non-profits, you can’t do much in the way of [program] and service delivery or mission fulfillment without money” (Foundation Group, 2017, para. 1).

In addition, COBEC would benefit from establishing partnerships with private sector entities. The partnerships should be defined so that COBEC and its private sector partners understand the expectations, implications, and benefits for each party. For example, if COBEC wishes to establish a partnership with Belize Telemedia Limited (BTL) or the Belize National Research Consortium (BNRC), questions such as the following should be posed and addressed: In what ways can COBEC and BTL or BNRC benefit from a partnership? What are the implications for COBEC's growth and development? For BTL's profit margin or BNRC's growth and development? What implications do the partnerships have for the growth and development of higher education institutions in Belize?

Recommendation S2. COBEC should review guidelines (e.g., Updegorve, 2007) on forming a successful consortium and create a secretariat to provide administrative support for COBEC's activities. The consortium could initiate the process by developing a plan that clarifies the administrative structure and functions of a secretariat or one that clarifies the duties and responsibilities of the individual who will fill the role of secretary or director.

Recommendation S3. If the consortium creates a secretariat, the secretary or director should be asked to develop a plan to establish a center or institute to facilitate COBEC's activities. The plan should be presented on COBEC's website, where members could review and comment on its workability. Then, at either the spring or the summer biannual meeting, the governing body should entertain further discussion, respond to questions, and ask the membership to vote to accept or reject the plan. The secretariat's director should then be tasked with executing the plan.

Recommendation S4. COBEC should revisit the goal of initiating a center or institute to serve as a facilitating entity for COBEC activities and decide whether it is worth pursuing. If so, the consortium should develop a feasible plan and be resolute about its implementation.

Recommendation S5. COBEC has achieved a wider geographic and national representation among non-Belizean members and has increased the number of two-year institutions among the non-Belizean membership. Nevertheless, more needs to be done. The consortium should continue to increase the non-Belizean membership by appointing a committee to develop and implement a plan for recruiting non-Belizean member institutions to broaden COBEC's geographic and national representation.

Recommendation S6. A majority of the survey respondents agreed that COBEC has developed effective communication and marketing tools that have increased the visibility of COBEC among tertiary-level institutions and interested constituencies beyond the COBEC membership. However, improving the website and brochure, and using other social media tools (e.g., Twitter, Facebook), would increase the consortium's visibility.

Recommendation S7. The consortium should continue archiving its materials. Members should be encouraged to submit books and research publications that document COBEC's accomplishments and address issues and challenges. The survey findings revealed that COBEC has successfully established and maintained a program for archiving COBEC's materials at Valdosta State University. COBEC members at the university have done an admirable job of

collecting COBEC-related minutes, committee reports, proposals, memoranda of agreement, and other documents.

Recommendation S8. COBEC should advertise and promote its major successes and accomplishments, especially advanced degree training, study abroad, professional development, and collaborative partnerships. The consortium also needs to develop and implement a marketing or public relations campaign to attract individuals and organizations whose interests are aligned with COBEC's purpose and mission.

Recommendation S9. The consortium should assign an ad hoc committee to review Knight's (2015) updated definition of internationalization, and, if necessary, recommend revisions to COBEC's mission and goals.

Recommendation S10. Continue to improve the biannual meetings by consulting the relevant literature such as Francisco (2007), Klonek, Paulsen, and Kauffeld (2012), Odermatt, Konig, and Kleinmann (2015), or Rogelberg, Shanock, and Scott (2012).

COBEC's Most Substantive Accomplishments

Of all the activities that COBEC has sponsored, conducted, or facilitated, four stood out as the most significant based on evidence from survey and interview data:

- facilitating and strengthening collaboration among all COBEC institutions
- implementing programs that target specific professional development needs
- sponsoring and facilitating graduate or advanced study programs
- sponsoring and facilitating study-abroad programs

In addition, data from the economic impact study and interviews found that COBEC's work with assisting students with financial aid was among COBEC's major successes. Other activities with large percentages (80%+) of agreement with effectiveness from survey respondents included the following:

- Writing a clear and realistic mission statement
- Conducting quality summer and winter programs
- Conducting quality programs and activities
- Writing a clear and realistic purpose statement
- Writing clear and realistic goals
- Forging articulation agreements
- Developing programs and processes to increase effectiveness of the academic exchanges of students, faculty, and staff of member institutions

Limitations

The evaluation has some limitations. First, although we surveyed COBEC's general membership, the majority of interviewees were founding members whose involvement with COBEC ranged

from 18 to 28 years. Although these participants provided substantive and valuable insights about COBEC's mission and goals, the views of newer members could broaden the consortium's perspectives and increase the understanding of its impact on higher education in and out of Belize. Nevertheless, although newer members may bring contemporary and diverse ideas about what COBEC represents and its impact on higher education, the breadth and depth of the experiences that the evaluation's participants possessed provided insight and a perspective that is beyond the ken of newer members. Participants' extensive knowledge and understanding of COBEC's history, purpose, mission, and accomplishments from its inception were definite advantages that enriched the results. This reality is in line with scholars who observed that "an increase in cumulative organizational experience provided individuals with the opportunity to benefit from knowledge accumulated by others" (Reagans, Argote, & Brooks, 2005, p. 869).

Second, of the 11 interviewees, seven were from U.S. institutions, and four were from Belize institutions. This underrepresentation may have skewed the interview results in favor of U.S. participants. Nevertheless, a 51% return rate from the general membership could, in some way, compensate for the imbalance.

Third, students who benefited from COBEC's programs and activities comprise a stakeholder group that is not adequately represented in the evaluation. Their participation in the interviews, especially by relating their experiences with COBEC institutions, could have further clarified COBEC's impact on its Belize and U.S. member institutions. Their contribution to and role in the evaluation, however, were addressed quantitatively in the economic impact study. In addition, the impact the University of North Florida Belize Master's Program—a consortium initiative—on 62 Belizean students was documented in a quantitative study. The results show that the students were highly satisfied with their overall experiences in the program, especially with relevant coursework and institutional accommodations (Nnoduechi, 2013, p. 131).

Finally, we had planned to content analyze COBEC's archived documents, but several constraints made this impossible. Instead, we listed available titles in Appendix E, categorized them in a manner that was consistent with the evaluation questions, and created a table showing the classifications presented in Appendix F. Then, where appropriate, we referred to the titles and used them to support and confirm the findings, especially in Part Five.

Overall Impact

The consortium is strong, with member institutions committed to COBEC's mission and goals, and serving as resources with specialized expertise. As new members join the organization, they broaden its geographic and national representation. Member institutions are recognized as valuable resources, and many have established strong relationships that are meaningful and mutually beneficial. These collaborative partnerships have advanced graduate and study-abroad programs that have positively impacted the lives of Belizean and U.S. members. Overall, COBEC has transformed the lives of numerous Belizean and U.S. students.

The consortium's impact on Belize and its higher education system has been extensive. It can be seen in the number of students who have participated in study-abroad programs and completed bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees (e.g., more than 1,176); the amount of funds that U.S.

institutions have donated to Belizean students (approximately \$5,955,000USD to \$11,910,000USD); the number of individuals who have participated in and benefited from professional development offerings in workshops and seminars; the number of articulation agreements that were forged between Belizean and non-Belizean members; the sources of financial support that were identified and established for Belizean students; and, in particular, the partnerships that exist between member institutions. COBEC's graduates are contributing in positive ways to the development and advancement of Belize's socioeconomic, educational, political, and cultural life in Belize. They expend time and energy in private- and public-sector occupations in Belize's six districts.

U.S. partner institutions have likewise been affected by COBEC's work and have benefited from the opportunities that COBEC has provided for them to engage in academic work through collaborative partnerships. They also have benefited from the cross-cultural experiences that enhanced their understanding of Belize's history, socioeconomic system, and culture. Both faculty and students from U.S. member institutions have welcomed and embraced opportunities to establish and build strong personal and professional relationships that have enhanced their disciplines, fields of study, and academic programs.

Essentially, the consortium has been an effective vehicle for professionalizing higher education in Belize and for internationalizing member institutions. High levels of cooperation exist among consortium members and serve as a strong foundation that supports and facilitates the execution of COBEC's programs and activities. Nevertheless, the consortium could be much stronger and more effective if it improved its organizational capacity.

In sum, COBEC is unique in that it has multiple foci: It does not have a lead institution, as do some higher education consortia; and U.S. member institutions are accredited, while most Belize institutions are not. The findings of this evaluation demonstrate that, despite these unique aspects, COBEC has had a positive impact on higher education in Belize and on its U.S. member institutions. The impact on higher education in both countries resulted from and was facilitated by intercultural collaborations, partnerships, and collegiality, which rest on a foundation of respect and trust. These factors explain why we can conclude with a high degree of certainty that COBEC, primarily through its professionalizing and internationalizing programs and activities, is fulfilling its purpose and mission.

REFERENCES

- Bakar, A., & Esa, A. (2017). Benefit of co-curricular. *Social Science, 103*, 45592-45595. Retrieved from http://eprints.uthm.edu.my/9082/1/1490183147_ELIXIR2017015558.pdf
- Allen, I., & Seaman, C. (2007). Likert scales and data analyses. *Quality Progress, 40*(7), 64–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2004.02012.x>
- Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The internationalization of higher education: Motivations and realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 11*(3–4), 290–305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315307303542>
- Alivernini, F., & Wildová, R. (2013). The Implications of international collaborative partnerships and within higher education institutions. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 84*, 1444–1447. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.771>
- Alvesson, M. (2013). *Understanding organizational culture*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Amundsen, C., & Wilson, M. (2012). Are we asking the right questions? A conceptual review of the educational development literature in higher education. *Review of Educational Research, 82*(1), 90–126. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654312438409>
- Mlah, A. B., & Esa, A. (2017). Benefit of co-curricular. *Social Science, 103*(38706–38717), 45592–45595.
- Barth, R. S. (2002). The culture builder. *Educational Leadership, 59*(8), 6-11. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may02/vol59/num08/The-Culture-Builder.aspx>
- Becker, T. (2005). Potential problems in the statistical control of variables in organizational research: A qualitative analysis with recommendations. *Organizational Research Methods, 8*(3), 274-285.
- Bedenlier, S., & Zawacki-Richter, O. (2015). Internationalization of higher education and the impacts on academic faculty members. *Research in Comparative and International Education, 10*(2), 185–201. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499915571707>
- Beerens, H. J. (2004). *Global opportunities and institutional embeddedness: Higher education consortia in Europe and Southeast Asia*. Enschede, The Netherlands: Center for Higher Education Policy Studies. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2013). *Artistry, choice, and leadership: Reframing organizations* (5th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bond, S. (2003). *Untapped resources: Internationalization of the curriculum and classroom experience: A selected literature review*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED549984.pdf>
-
-

- Brancato, V. C. (2003). Professional development in higher education. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 98, 59–65. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.100>
- Breen, R., Brew, A., Jenkins, A., & Lindsay, R. (2003). *Reshaping teaching in higher education: A guide to linking teaching with research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bryson, J. M. (2011). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement*. (4th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Burke, W. W. (2014). *Organization change: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Buschlen, E., & Guthrie, K. L. (2014). Seamless leadership learning in curricular and cocurricular facets of university life: A Pragmatic approach to praxis. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 7(4), 58–64. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21311>
- Chen, H. T. (2015). *Practical program evaluation: Theory-driven evaluation and the integrated evaluation perspective* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Chiseri-Strater, E. (1996). Turning in upon ourselves: Positionality, subjectivity, and reflexivity in case study and ethnographic research. In & P. Mortensen, & G. E. Kirst. (Eds.), *Ethics and presentation in qualitative studies of literacy* (pp. 115-133). Keynon Road, Urbana: IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Coryell, J. E., Durodoye, B. A., Wright, R. R., Pate, P. E., & Nguyen, S. (2012). Case studies of internationalization in adult and higher education: Inside the processes of four universities in the United States and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 16(1), 75–98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315310388945>
- Craven, A. (2012). Social justice and higher education. *Perspectives: Policy and practice in higher education*, 16(1), 23-28. doi: 10.1080/13603108.2011.611831
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle, NJ: Pearson.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2015). *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). 467–468.
- Dieck-Assad, M. D. L. (2013). Globalization and the business schools: Toward business and world-sustainable leadership. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 24(3-4), 168-187.
- Dysart, S., & Weckerle, C. (2015). Professional development in higher education: A model for meaningful technology integration. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Innovations in Practice*, 14, 255–265.

- Elias, K., & Drea, C. (2013). The co-curricular record: Enhancing a postsecondary education. *College Quarterly*, 16(1).
- Evers, J. C. (2016). Elaborating on thick analysis: About thoroughness and creativity in qualitative analysis. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/2369-10240-3-PB>
- Falshaw, J. R., Glaister, K. W., & Tatoglu, E. (2006). Evidence on formal strategic planning and company performance. *Management Decision*, 44(1), 9–30. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740610641436>
- Fetters, M., Curry, L., & Creswell, J. (2013). Achieving integration in mixed methods designs—principles and practices. *Health Services Research*. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1475-6773.12117/full>
- Flick, U. (2014). *An Introduction to qualitative research (5th Ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Flora, B. H., & Hirt, J. B. (2010). Educational consortia in a knowledge economy: Collaboration, competition, and organizational equilibrium. *The Review of Higher Education*, 33(4), 569–592. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.0.0155>
- Foundation Group. (2017). *4 simple steps to raising all the money your nonprofit needs*. Retrieved from <https://www.501c3.org/4-simple-steps-to-raising-all-the-money-your-nonprofit-needs/>
- Francisco, J. M. (2007). How to create and facilitate meetings that matter. *Information Management Journal*, 41(6), 54–58.
- Frechtling, J., Frierson, H., Hood, S., Hughes, G., & Katzenmeyer, C. (2002). *The 2002 user friendly handbook for project evaluation*. Washington, DC: The National Science Foundation.
- Fuller, M. B. (2014). A History of financial aid to students. *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 44(1), 42–68. Retrieved from <http://publications.nasfaa.org/jsfa/vol44/iss1/4>
- Furlong, A., Cartmel, F., & Society for research into higher education. (2009). Higher education and social justice, 2009–2011. Retrieved from http://www.amazon.co.uk/Higher-Education-Justice-University-Imprint/dp/0335223621/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1387057598&sr=8-1&keywords=higher+education+and+social+justice
- Gagliardi, P. (2003). Understanding organizational culture. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 48(1), 133–137. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3556624>

- Graham, C. (2002). Strengthening institutional capacity in poor countries. *Brookings Policy Brief*. Retrieved from <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN021133.pdf>
- Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(3), 255–274. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737011003255>
- Guetterman, T., Creswell, J. W., & Kuckartz, U. (2015). Use of joint displays and MAXQDA software to represent the results of mixed methods research. In M. T. McCrudden, G. Schraw, & C. W. Buckendahl (Eds.), *Use of visual displays in research and testing: Coding, interpreting and reporting data* (pp. 145–175). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc.
- Guskey, T. R., & Yoon, K. S. (2009). What works in professional development? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 19(7), 495–500.
- Halbesleben, J. R. B., & Whitman, M. V. (2013). Evaluating survey quality in health services research: A decision framework for assessing nonresponse bias. *Health Services Research*, 48(3), pp. 913-930. doi:10.1111/1475-6773.12002
- Healey, N. M. (2015). Towards a risk-based typology for transnational education. *Higher Education*, 69(1), 1–18.
- Helms, R. M. (2015). International higher education partnerships: A global review of standards and practices. *CIGE Insights: ACE Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement*, 1–48.
- Hickey, W., Achtem, J. A., & Nuner, J. (2012). *International partnerships: A model for educational organizations*. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.uttyler.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=edulead_fac
- Janesick, V. J. (2000). The choreography of qualitative research design. In Y. S. Denzin, N. K., & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 279-399). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Jinnah, S., & Young, O. R. (2014). *Post-treaty politics: Secretariat influence in global environmental governance*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2017). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (6th ed). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kantardzic, M. (2011). *Data mining: Concepts, models, methods, and algorithms*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

- Kehm, B. M., & Teichler, U. (2007). Research on internationalization in higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3–4), 260–273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315307303534>
- Klebnikov, S. (2015, July). More U.S. students are studying abroad, but is it enough? *Forbes Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/sergeiklebnikov/2015/07/30/more-u-s-students-are-studying-abroad-but-is-it-enough/3/#218b5ba8121c>
- Knight, J. (2005). *An internationalization model: Responding to new realities and challenges. Higher Education in Latin America: The international dimension*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-6209-9>
- Knight, J. (2015). Updating the definition of internationalization. *International Higher Education*, 33, 2–3. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315315602927>
- Klonek, F. E., Paulsen, H., & Kauffeld, S. (2015). They meet, they talk . . . but nothing changes: Meetings as a focal context for studying change processes in organizations. In J. A. Allen, N. Lehmann-Willenbrock, & S. G. Rogelberg (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of meeting science* (pp. 413–439). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Kosmutzky, A., & Putty, R. (2015). Transcending borders and traversing boundaries: A systematic review of the literature on transnational, offshore, cross-border, and borderless higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 20(1), 8–33.
- Krippendorff, K. (2013). *Content analysis: Introduction to the methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kuckartz, U. (2014). *Qualitative text analysis: A guide to methods, practice and using software*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lawler, E. (2007). Built to change: How to achieve sustained organizational effectiveness. *Strategic Direction*. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/sd.2007.05623dae.001>
- Lee, Y. S., & Schottenfeld, M. A. (2014). Collaborative knowledge creation in the higher education academic library. *Journal of Learning Spaces*, 3(1), 1–12.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1980). The Distinction between merit and worth in evaluation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2(4), 61–71. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737002004061>
- Litwin, M. S. (1995). *How to measure survey reliability and validity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Long, B. T., & Riley, E. (2007). Financial aid: A Broken bridge to college access? *Harvard Educational Review*, 77(1), 39–63. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.77.1.765h8777686r7357>

- Long, J., Vogelaar, A., Hale, B. W. (2014). Toward sustainable educational travel. *Journal of Sustainable tourism*, 22(3), 421-439.
- Lusthaus, C., Adrien, M., & Perstinger, M. (1999). Capacity development: definitions, issues and implications for planning, monitoring and evaluation. *Universal Occasional Paper*, 35(35), 1–21. Retrieved from <http://preval.org/documentos/2034.pdf>
- Marginson, S., & Van der Wende, M. (2007). *Globalization and higher education*. OECD *Education Working Papers*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/173831738240>
- Maringe, F., & Foskett, N. (2012). *Globalization and internationalization in higher education: Theoretical, strategic and management Perspectives* (Vol. 6). New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2016). *Designing qualitative research (6th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McBurnie, G., & Ziguas, C. (2006). Transnational education. *Transnational education: Issues and trends in offshore higher education*. London, UK: Routledge.
- McHugh, M. (2012). Interrater reliability. *Biochemia Medica*, 22(3), 276–82.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (4th ed.)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Mihi-Ramirez, A., Kumpikaite, V. (2013). The whys and wherefores of student international migration: European and Latin-American economic perspective. *Economics and Management*, 18(2), 351-359.
- Miles, M., Huberman, A., & Saldana, J. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Murphy, D., Sahakyan, N., Yong-Yi, D., & Magnan, S. S. (2014). The impact of study abroad on the global engagement of university graduates. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 24, 1–24.
- Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2003). An experience of interculturality: Student travelers abroad. In M. G. Alred, M. Byram, & M. Fleming (Eds.), *Intercultural experience and education: Concepts and comparisons* (pp. 101–113). Tonawanda, NY: Multicultural Matters.
- Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P., & Wholey, J. S. (2015). *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (Eds.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Nicholls, G. (2014). *Professional development in higher education: New dimensions and directions*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Nicholson, K. (2011). Quality assurance in higher education: A review of the literature. *Council of Ontario Universities Degree Level Expectations Project*. Retrieved from <http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Quality%20Assurance%20Literature%20Review.pdf>
- Nnoduechi, C. I. (2013). Nontraditional graduate students' satisfaction with their transnational educational experience (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of North Florida, Jacksonville, FL.
- Obst, D., & Kuder, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Joint and double degree programs: An emerging model for transatlantic exchange*. New York, NY: Institute of International Education.
- Odermatt, I., Konig, C. J., & Kleinmann, M. (2015). Meeting preparation and design characteristics. In J. A. Allen, N. Lehmann-Willenbrock, & S. G. Rogelberg (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of meeting science* (pp. 49–68). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2009). *Higher education to 2030* (Vol. 2). Paris, France: OECD <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264075375-en>
- Ortlieb, E. T., Biddix, J. P., & Doepker, G. M. (2010). A collaborative approach to higher education induction. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *11*(2), 109–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787410365655>
- Owens, J. M. (2007). *Program evaluation: Forms and approaches* (3rd ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Paige, R. M., Fry, G. W., Stallman, E. M., Josić, J., & Jon, J. (2009). Study abroad for global engagement: The long-term impact of mobility experiences. *Intercultural Education*, *20*(Supplement), 29–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980903370847>
- Paulson, M. B. (Ed.). (2017). *The handbook of higher education* (Vol 32). Cham: Switzerland.
- Pill, A. (2005). Models of professional development in the education and practice of new teachers in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *10*(2), 175–188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1356251042000337936>
- Qualtrics Software. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.qualtrics.com>
- Quinn, A., Lemay, G., Larsen, P., & Johnson, D. M. (2009). Service quality in higher education. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *20*(2), 139–152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14783360802622805>
- Reagans, R., Argote, L., & Brooks, D. (2005). Individual experience and experience working together: Predicting learning rates from knowing who knows what and knowing how to work together. *Management Science*, *51*(6), 869–881. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1050.0366>

- Rogelberg, S. G., Shanock, L. R., & Scott, C. W. (2012). Wasted time and money in meetings: Increasing return on investment. *Small Group Research*, 43(2), 236–245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496411429170>
- Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rossmann, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2011). *Learning in the field: An Introduction to qualitative research*. Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ryan, G. W., & Bernard, H. R. (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods*, 15(1), 85–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X02239569>
- Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sargeant, A., & Jay, E. (2014). *Fundraising management. Analysis planning and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Schreier, M. (2014). Qualitative content analysis. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 170–183). Thousand, Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Scott, J. C. (2006). The mission of the university: Medieval to postmodern transformations. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77(1), 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2006.0007>
- Scott, I., Yeld, N., & Nendry, J. (2007). Higher education monitor. *Higher Education*, 25(6), 1–98. Retrieved from <http://www.che.ac.za/>
- Shin, J. C., Lee, L. J., & Kim, Y. (2013). Research collaboration across higher education systems: maturity, language use, and regional differences. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(3), 425–440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.774585>
- Spradley, J. (1998). *The ethnographic interview*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Statistical Institute of Belize. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.sib.org.bz/statistics/other-statistics>
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sutton, S. B., Egginton, E., & Favela, R. (2012). Strategic partnerships and linkages. In D. K. Deardorff, H. de Wit, J. Heyl, and T. Adams (Eds.). *The Sage handbook of international higher education* (pp. 147–166). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tarrant, M., Rubin, D., & Stoner, L. (2014). The added value of study abroad: Fostering a global citizenry. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 18(2), 141–161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315313497589>

- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2010). Overview of contemporary issues in mixed methods research. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (pp. 1-44). Retrieved from http://www.sagepub.in/upm-data/34743_Chapter1.pdf
- The International Consortium for Educational Development. (2006). Educational development. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 11(1), 67-69. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13601440600787869?journalCode=rija20>
- Tompson, G. H., Beekman, R., Tompson, H. B., Kolbe, P. T. (2013). Doing more than learning: what do students contribute during a study abroad experience? *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 13(2), 34-44.
- Updegorve, A. (2006). Forming a successful consortium. *Consortium Standards Bulletin*, 10, 6–18.
- Van de Water, J., Green, M. F., & Koch, K. (2008). *International partnerships: Guidelines for colleges and universities*. Washington, DC.
- Van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the field. On writing ethnography (2nd ed)*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- VERBI Software. (2016). MAXQDA Analytics Pro. Berlin: Germany: VERBI.
- Wankel, L. A., & Wankel, C. (2016). An overview of integrating curricular and co-Curricular endeavors to enhance student outcomes. In *Integrating Curricular and Co-Curricular Endeavors to Enhance Student Outcomes* (pp. 3–12). <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78635-064-020161001>
- Webb, L. D., & Norton, M. S. (2013). *Human resources administration: Personnel issues and needs in education*. New York, NY: Pearson.
- Whittaker, R. (1993). Consortium evaluation in higher education. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 18(3), 205-219.
- Yarbrough, D., Shulha, L., Hopson, R., & Caruthers, F. (Eds.). (2011). *The program evaluation standards: A guide for evaluators and evaluation users* (3rd ed.). Thousand, Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Zuber-Skerritt, O. (2013). *Professional development in higher education: A theoretical framework for action research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Zuber-Skerritt, O., Fletcher, M., & Kearney, J. (2015). *Professional learning in higher education and communities: Towards a new vision for action research*. London, UK: Palgrave.

Appendix A

COBEC's Early Meetings

Agendas for the earliest meetings of COBEC, between 1989 and 1990, show the solidarity and purposefulness of the organization and the growing commitment by U.S. and Belize educators to the collaboration and the many COBEC activities focused on educational development in Belize.

The first meeting for the establishment of COBEC was held on June 9-10, 1989, at the University College of Belize. Dr. Colville Young, President of the University College of Belize, presided. After an opening address by Minister of Education Said Musa, the morning session was devoted to a discussion of the founding document entitled "A Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation." After review, deliberation and amendments made by the members, it was proposed that the document be entitled, "Memorandum of Agreement for the Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation." After a number of minor changes in wording were suggested, the Memorandum passed, and the motion to adopt was approved. With that action, the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was ratified and the consortium launched on June, 9, 1989. After the vote, it was signed by the Belizeans who officially represented their institutions. However, because all Belize institutions were not represented by individuals who were authorized to sign officially, and the U.S. representatives did not sign the document, another official signing ceremony was held at the meeting on February 3, 1990. All member institutions, both Belize and U.S. representatives signed the agreement on that occasion.

The ratification of the MOA was the first agenda item for the morning session. The next item was the election of COBEC's first officers. Dr. Colville Young was elected the Belize co-chair, Dr. Betty Flinchum was elected the U.S. co-chair, Mrs. Cynthia Thompson was elected secretary, and Dr. Harold Bergsma was elected treasurer.

Because the Belize co-chair, Dr. Young, chaired the morning session, the newly elected U.S. co-chair, Dr. Flinchum, presided over the afternoon session. The agenda called for presentations by the representatives of the Belizean tertiary-level institutions. The first presentation was given by Cynthia Thompson, Principal of Belize Teachers' College (BTTC). She explained BTTC's faculty exchange programs with MSU and WKU and student/faculty programs with New Mexico State University (NMSU). Mrs. Thompson viewed the role of COBEC as facilitating staff exchanges in the areas of need such as librarians, sabbatical faculty exchanges, and the recognition of BTTC's courses and programs.

The next presentation in the afternoon session was given by Dr. Colville Young and Dr. George Walker. Dr. Young gave an overview of the Belizean educational structure, including a brief history of formal education in Belize; a demographic overview of primary and secondary school populations; the relationship of church and state in funding and control of education; the names and locations of the tertiary education institutions and their offerings; and the process of external exams. He then explained the formation of UCB, its curriculum, and relationships and announced that its first building was soon to be completed. Two of his concerns were the high cost of textbooks and the problem of bi-lingualism in Belize.

Following Dr. Young, Dr. Walker explained the origin, structure and programs of UCB and its relationship to Ferris State University. He cited the ongoing degree programs and the number of Belizean graduates in those programs. He challenged COBEC with the problem of non-accreditation in Belize colleges and UCB.

Augustine Flores presented for the newly created Stann Creek Ecumenical. His request was for assistance to get his course content clarified and acceptable for transfer to sixth form (community college) and for his college to become an accredited institution. Carlos Castillo followed Mr. Flores and said that his problems were the same as Stann Creek Ecumenical because they were started at the same time and faced the same issues. COBEC members suggested that the two institutions work with UCB's and BTTC's curriculum and redesign their courses to provide an articulated transition into the tertiary level.

The Belize College of Agriculture's presentation was given by Gabino Canto. He stated that the college was established in 1978 and began offering associate degrees in 1987. He urged COBEC to assist by offering scholarships to the college's graduates for study abroad. He stated that the college was in dire need of microcomputers. He explained that the college was administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, but that may change to the Ministry of Education.

Sister Sylvia Flores presented the report for the Belize School of Nursing. She gave an overview of the four programs offered in the School: Professional Nurse (3 years); Rural Health Nurse (2 years), and Practical Nurse and Midwifery (1 year). She stressed the need for faculty exchange with COBEC member institutions.

The University of the West Indies Extramural Department (UWI) report was given by Dr. Joseph Palacio. He explained that they were currently reviewing the "A" level entry requirements and stated that at present only St. John's College sixth form students met the entry requirements on the basis of their associate degree. St. John's was seeking accreditation from UWI.

Belize Technical College was represented by Vernon Card. He explained the structure of the college and its departments and said that an associate degree was offered in three out of four departments. He said that both British and American approaches were used in technical education and that all students sat the British "A" level exams. He concluded his report with the information that Belize Technical had helped in the development of UCB and that they envisioned COBEC as a partner in the accreditation process for both institutions.

After the presentations, the membership decided that the issues and needs arising from the presentations would be referred to committees for deliberation and recommendation for action. This was the way, in the beginning meetings of COBEC, Belizean educational needs were identified, future programs agreed upon, and COBEC actions endorsed and understood by all members.

The co-chair circulated a list of committees that would address the issues arising from the presentations. The first committees were: Articulation/Accreditation; Budget/Financing; Evaluation/Research/Data Base; and Faculty/Staff Developmental/Student Exchange Programs.

The committee reports were significant because they set the agenda for COBEC, beyond the first year of operation. They initiated action and focused the collaboration for many years. Recommendations were made from the committees as follows:

The Articulation/Accreditation committee proposed (a) a common course language and nomenclature for the description of courses throughout Belize colleges so that articulation agreements could be made with sixth forms and U.S. institutions and (b) that information on requirements for accreditation from accrediting bodies such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) be forwarded to Belize educators along with information from U.S. institutions regarding how to meet those requirements.

The Budget/Financing committee proposed (a) an invoicing and dues structure that would facilitate each institution's payment of annual dues to the consortium; (b) establish a clearinghouse for grants and contracts that would identify resources of funding for the consortium; and (c) check on the U.S. *Denton Amendment* and other information on how to ship goods to Belize.

The committee on Evaluation/Research/Data Base made several recommendations: (a) set up a tele facsimile Network System housed at the UCB library to facilitate communication; (b) establish an Educational Research Institute at UCB funded by the Ministry of Education; (c) focus on a national plan for economic development in education.

Several recommendations were made by the committee on Faculty/Staff Development/Student Exchange: (a) set up a faculty and staff exchange between consortium institutions and Belize colleges; (b) facilitate sabbatical faculty accommodation in Belize; (c) set up a method for special needs staffing for Belize institutions; (d) facilitate research/study/orientation options for Belize institution's staff for a short term; and (e) set up an exchange procedure for Belizean and U.S. students.

The first meeting ended with charges to the committees for follow up to their recommendations and with a call for other recommendations. Dr. Peggy Wright asked that a special collection of publications on Belize be set up in the UB library and made a proposal for a tele facsimile Network System in the UCB library.

The second official meeting of COBEC took place on February 3-4, 1990, at the University College of Belize (UCB) with Belize co-chair Dr. Colville Young, President of UCB, presiding over the opening session and U.S. co-chair Dr. Betty Flinchum presiding over the afternoon session each day. During the morning session, the first official action of the institution's representatives was to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). After discussion and corrections, the MOA was ratified and signed on February 3, 1990. The minutes of that first official meeting captured the motion and vote to ratify the MOA and shows the signatures of representatives from six U.S. institutions and eight Belizean institutions: Ken Wagner, Ferris State University; James McCoy, Murray State University; Harold Bergsma, New Mexico State University; Donald Hill, Texas Southern University; Betty Flinchum, University of North Florida; Tracy Harrington, Valdosta State University; John Petersen, Western Kentucky

University; Hugh O'Brien, Belize College of Agriculture; Winifred Swift, Belize School of Nursing; Cynthia Thompson, Belize Teachers' College; Vernon Card, Belize Technical College; Carlos Castillo, Corozol Junior College; Augustine Flores, Stann Creek Ecumenical College; Fr. James Murphy, St. John's College; and Ernest Raymond, Ministry of Education.

This second conference was full of significant decisions with the first elected officers presiding and recording. Secretary Cynthia Thompson recorded 11 pages of official business which included an official signing of the Memorandum of Agreement by the persons authorized to sign for each institution. That signature page is preserved in the COBEC archives at Valdosta State University. The Treasurer, Harold Bergsma, clarified the dues structure for each institution, the procedure for the use of funds accrued and the payment of registration fees for conferences.

Committee reports were presented to the membership. The Articulation and Accreditation Committee reported the establishment of the Association of Tertiary Level Institutions in Belize (ATLIB) and explained its role. UNF's articulation agreement with ATLIB institutions was initiated with the view of sharing that agreement with all COBEC institutions. This agreement would allow the transfer of credits from Belize institutions to U.S. institutions when approved by each institution.

The Budget and Finance Committee announced the establishment of a COBEC account at New Mexico State University. There would be no cost to COBEC for the administration of this account.

The Evaluation/Research/Database Committee reported that they will develop a proposal for funding the developing COBEC's basic operational structure.

The Developmental/Study Abroad Programs Committee reported that MSU had arranged to provide an apartment for faculty housing and that the committee would prepare a proposal for the Ministry of Education for future housing.

In the early years, the work of COBEC was carried out through the activities of these committees. The early reports of COBEC committees indicated the level of dedication and commitment by the membership to the needs of Belize in educational development.

After other discussions, and thanks to the host UCB, the chair recognized Dr. Otis King who invited COBEC to hold its first meeting in the U.S. at Texas Southern University in Houston. The date was tentatively set for August, 1990.

Appendix B

COBEC Belize Member Institutions

*Belize Adventist Junior College

Belize College of Agriculture

Belize National Library Service

BLISS School of Nursing (formerly Belize School of Nursing)

Belize Teachers' College

Belize Technical College

*Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College

*Corozal Community College

*Galen University

* Independence Junior College

Jaguar Creek Environmental Field Station

Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture

Muffles Junior College

*Sacred Heart Junior College

*San Pedro Junior College

*St. John's College

*Stann Creek Ecumenical Junior College

UCB Belmopan Junior College

UCB Toledo Junior College

*University of Belize (formerly University College of Belize)

*University of the West Indies

*Wesley Junior College

Note that *italicized institutions* were formerly affiliated with University College of Belize, and are now under the umbrella of the University of Belize.

US COBEC Member Institutions

*Albany State University

*Armstrong Atlantic State University

Bainbridge College

Baylor University

*Bossier Parish Community College

*Bridgewater State University

*College of Coastal Georgia

Colorado State University

*Columbus State University

*Cortland State University

Dalton State College

Defiance College

East Carolina University

Ferris State University

Fort Valley State University

Gainesville State College

*Georgia College & State University

Georgia Perimeter College

Hastings College

*Hillsborough Community College

Kennesaw State University

*Madison Area Technical College

Memorial University

Metropolitan Community College

*Murray State University

*New Mexico State University

*Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

*Oklahoma State University
School for International Training (Vermont)
*SOWELA Technical Community College
Texas Southern University
*The Citadel
*University of Arkansas
*University of Florida
University of Hawaii at Hilo
*University of Illinois at Chicago
University of Indianapolis
University of Mississippi
University of Montana
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of New Hampshire
*University of North Carolina at Wilmington
*University of North Florida
*University of North Georgia
*University of South Florida
University of Vermont
University of West Florida
University of West Georgia
*Valdosta State University
Virginia Tech University
Viterbo University
Wayne State University
*Western Kentucky University
*Wright State University

* indicates current members (April, 2018)

Appendix C

COBEC's Goals and Objectives

COBEC has articulated three major goals, achievable by a list of enabling activities. This study evaluated the success of COBEC in achieving its three goals and associated activities, as articulated on the COBEC website (<http://archives.valdosta.edu/cobec/goals.php>).

The stated goals are to:

1. Design, develop and implement collaborative programs and activities that address higher education needs in Belize
2. Contribute to the internationalization of member institutions
3. Strengthen the organizational capacity of COBEC as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and internationalizing member institutions.
(<http://archives.valdosta.edu/cobec/goals.php>)

The specific subgoals associated with each of the three COBEC goals (<http://archives.valdosta.edu/cobec/goals.php>) are listed below:

Goal 1: Professionalize or design, develop and implement collaborative programs and activities that address higher education needs in Belize

- Implement short-term programs that target specific professional development needs of higher education faculty, staff, and administrators
- Provide advanced degree training for individual faculty, staff, and administrators from Belizean institutions
- Address institutional resource needs related to technology, libraries, laboratories
- Address curriculum development needs of all COBEC institutions, including programs such as internationalizing the curriculum and area studies
- Develop programs that address student needs related to academic advisement and student support services
- Organize a clearinghouse for donations of equipment and educational materials to Belizean institutions
- Participate in the development of quality assurance initiatives for Belizean institutions
- Broaden the base of Belizean institutions engaged in COBEC-sponsored activities
- Pursue active research agendas involving Belizean and non-Belizean faculty, administrators, and students
- Work with ATLIB to conduct needs assessment
- Strengthen collaboration among all COBEC institutions
- Assist Belizean institutions in meeting accreditation criteria
- Facilitate the forging of articulation agreements between Belizean and non-Belizean member institutions
- Formally assess the impact of scholarship support by non-Belizean institutions on the achievement of staff development goals of Belizean institutions

Goal 2: Contribute to the internationalization of member institutions

- Develop programs and processes to increase the number and effectiveness of academic exchange of students, faculty, and staff of COBEC member institutions
- Identify and develop sources of financial aid for Belizean students studying at non-Belizean member institutions
- Organize study abroad programs, service learning opportunities, and internship experiences for students from both Belizean and non-Belizean member institutions
- Develop curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions on aspects of Belizean culture, history, and society, using professional resources available through Belizean member institutions

Goal 3: Strengthen the organizational capacity of COBEC as a mechanism for meeting higher education needs in Belize and internationalizing member institutions.

(<http://archives.valdosta.edu/cobec/goals.php>)

- Design and implement a strategy for obtaining grant funding to support COBEC projects in Belize
- Achieve a wider geographic and national representation among non-Belizean members
- Increase the number of two-year institutions among the non-Belizean membership.
- Develop effective communication and marketing tools, including a website and brochure, to increase the visibility of COBEC among tertiary-level institutions and interested constituencies beyond the COBEC membership
- Create a COBEC secretariat to provide administrative support for COBEC activities
- Initiate a center or institute to serve as a facilitating entity for COBEC activities
- Establish and maintain a program for archiving COBEC materials
- Generate additional interest and investment in COBEC in Belize and within each non-Belizean institution

Appendix D

Informed Consent and Survey Questionnaire

Survey Informed Consent Message

Dear COBEC Member:

I want to thank you for taking the time to participate in this evaluation survey of COBEC. We are assessing the effectiveness of COBEC and its impact on Belize and US tertiary institutions. The information we collect will be aggregated and analyzed to identify COBEC's programs, processes, and activities that have worked well and those in need of enhancement.

The survey should take less than 45 minutes. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your responses will only be shared with research team members. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law and your identity will not be revealed in the final manuscript.

There are no anticipated risks, compensation or other direct benefits to you as a participant in this interview. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate and may discontinue your participation in the survey at any time without consequence.

If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact Dr. Emilia Hodge at 352-392-7865. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant rights may be directed to the IRB02 office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611; (352) 392-0433.

By participating in this survey, you give me permission to report your responses anonymously in the final manuscript.

Remember, you don't have to respond to any question you don't want to and you may end the survey at any time.

Thank you,

COBEC Evaluation Team

COBEC Survey Questionnaire

Background Information

1. Please indicate your status in COBEC. *Select one.*
 1. Current member
 2. Past Member
 3. Other

 2. Please indicate how many years you have been a member of COBEC. _____

 3. Please indicate your gender. *Select one*
 1. Female
 2. Male
 3. Other
 4. Prefer not to respond

 5. Please identify the category that best describes your status at the time you first joined COBEC. *Select one*
 1. Belize resident
 2. U.S. resident
 3. Other

 6. Please indicate your age. *Select one*
 1. 25-35 years of age
 2. 36-45 years of age
 3. 46-55 years of age
 4. 56-65 years of age
 5. 66 or older

 8. With what type of institution are you associated? Please select one.
 1. Belize 4-year college or university
 2. Belize community college or technical institute
 3. Belize preschool or K-12 school or school system
 4. Non-Belizean educational institution
 5. U. S. 4-year college or university
 6. U.S. community college or technical institute
 7. U.S. preschool or K-12 school or school system
 8. Non- U.S. educational institution
 9. Retired
 10. Other, please specify. _____

 9. How did you first learn about COBEC? Select all that apply.
 1. Talked to colleagues and friends who were members of COBEC
 2. Talked to colleagues and friends who were not members of COBEC
-
-

3. Looked for information on COBEC's web site
4. Looked for information in COBEC publications
5. Other, please describe

SECTION 1. How satisfied are/were you with each of the following aspects of COBEC?

For each item, please indicate whether you are/were Very Satisfied (**VS**), Satisfied (**S**), Have No Opinion (**NO**), Dissatisfied (**D**), Very Dissatisfied (**VD**), or whether the item is Not Applicable (**NA**). You may add comments to any of these items.

1. Information about COBEC before I joined
VS S NO D VD NA
2. Orientation to COBEC
VS S NO D VD NA
3. Quality of the summer and winter conferences
VS S NO D VD NA
4. Quality of the programs and activities
VS S NO D VD NA
5. Effectiveness of the standing committees
VS S NO D VD NA
6. Clarity and realistic nature of COBEC's purpose
VS S NO D VD NA
7. Clarity and realistic nature of COBEC's mission
VS S NO D VD NA
8. Clarity and realistic nature of COBEC's goals
VS S NO D VD NA
9. Clarity and functionality of the bylaws
VS S NO D VD NA

SECTION 2. Collaborative Programs and Activities

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about collaborative programs and activities. For each item, indicate whether you Strongly Agree (**SA**), Agree (**A**), Agree Somewhat (**AS**), Undecided (**U**), Disagree Somewhat (**DS**), Disagree (**D**), or Strongly Disagree (**SD**).

1. COBEC has implemented short-term programs that target specific professional development needs of higher education faculty, staff, and administrators.
SA A AS U DS D SD
2. COBEC has provided advanced degree training for individual faculty, staff, and administrators from Belizean institutions.
SA A AS U DS D SD

3. COBEC has addressed institutional resource needs related to technology, libraries, and laboratories.
SA A AS U DS D SD
4. COBEC has addressed curriculum development needs of all COBEC institutions, including programs such as internationalizing the curriculum and area studies.
SA A AS U DS D SD
5. COBEC has developed programs that address student needs related to academic advisement and student support services.
SA A AS U DS D SD
6. COBEC has organized a clearinghouse for donations of equipment and educational materials to Belizean institutions.
SA A AS U DS D SD
7. COBEC has participated in the development of quality assurance initiatives for Belizean institutions
SA A AS U DS D SD
8. COBEC has broadened the base of Belizean institutions engaged in COBEC-sponsored activities.
SA A AS U DS D SD
9. COBEC has pursued active research agendas involving Belizean and non-Belizean faculty, administrators, and students.
SA A AS U DS D SD
10. COBEC has worked with ATLIB to conduct needs assessment.
SA A AS U DS D SD
11. COBEC has strengthened collaboration among all COBEC institutions.
SA A AS U DS D SD
12. COBEC has assisted Belizean institutions in meeting accreditation criteria.
SA A AS U DS D SD
13. COBEC has facilitated the forging of articulation agreements between Belizean and non-Belizean member institutions.
SA A AS U DS D SD
14. COBEC has formally assessed the impact of scholarship support by non-Belizean institutions on the achievement of staff development goals of Belizean institutions.
SA A AS U DS D SD

SECTION 3. Contributions to the Internationalization of Member Institutions

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about COBEC's contributions to internationalization of member institutions. For each item, indicate whether you Strongly

Agree (**SA**), Agree (**A**), Agree Somewhat (**AS**), Undecided (**U**), Disagree Somewhat (**DS**), Disagree (**D**), or Strongly Disagree (**SD**).

1. COBEC has developed programs and processes to increase the number and effectiveness of academic exchange of students, faculty, and staff of COBEC member institutions.
SA A AS U DS D SD
2. COBEC has identified and develop sources of financial aid for Belizean students studying at non-Belizean member institutions.
SA A AS U DS D SD
3. COBEC has organized study abroad programs, service learning opportunities, and internship experiences for students from both Belizean and non-Belizean member institutions.
SA A AS U DS D SD
4. COBEC has developed curricular and co-curricular programs and activities at non-Belizean institutions on aspects of Belizean culture, history, and society, using professional resources available through Belizean member institutions.
SA A AS U DS D SD

SECTION 4: COBEC's Organizational Capacity to Meet Needs in Belize and COBEC's Member Institutions

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about COBEC's organizational capacity to meet needs in Belize and COBEC's member institutions. For each item, indicate whether you Strongly Agree (**SA**), Agree (**A**), Agree Somewhat (**AS**), Undecided (**U**), Disagree Somewhat (**DS**), Disagree (**D**), or Strongly Disagree (**SD**).

1. COBEC has designed and implemented a strategy for obtaining grant funding to support COBEC projects in Belize.
SA A AS U DS D SD
2. COBEC has achieved a wider geographic and national representation among non-Belizean members.
SA A AS U DS D SD
3. COBEC has increased the number of two-year institutions among the non-Belizean membership.
SA A AS U DS D SD
4. COBEC has developed effective communication and marketing tools, including a website and brochure, to increase the visibility of COBEC among tertiary-level institutions and interested constituencies beyond the COBEC membership.
SA A AS U DS D SD
5. COBEC has created a COBEC secretariat to provide administrative support for COBEC activities.
SA A AS U DS D SD
6. COBEC has initiated a center or institute to serve as a facilitating entity for COBEC activities.
SA A AS U DS D SD

7. COBEC has established and maintained a program for archiving COBEC materials.
SA A AS U DS D SD
8. COBEC has generated additional interest and investment in COBEC in Belize and within each non-Belizean institution
SA A AS U DS D SD

SECTION 5: COBEC's Impact

To what extent has COBEC impacted (or is impacting) the following entities in Belize and the U.S.? Strongly Impacted (SI), Somewhat Impacted (SWI), Not Sure (NS), Likely Did Not Impact (LDNI), Definitely Did Not Impact (DDNI). You may add comments to any of these items.

	<u>Belize</u>					<u>United States</u>				
• Education	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI
• Dual Degrees	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI
• Faculty Exchanges	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI
• Collaboration Bet. Bz/US Intit.	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI
• Graduate Education	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI
• Internships	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI
• Publications	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI
• Study Abroad Programs	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI	SI	SWI	NS	LDNI	DDNI

SECTION 6: Open-ended questions

1. What were the major reasons you to joined COBEC?
2. What information about COBEC you wished you knew before you joined?
3. What were (or are) the most positive aspects of COBEC for you?
4. What were (or are) the most negative aspects COBEC for you?
5. What would you change about COBEC?

Thank you for your cooperation. We appreciate the information you have provided and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Appendix E

List of COBEC's Past Projects and Programs

This is a list of COBEC projects culled from the COBEC papers held in the Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections. It is weighted to the earlier years because that is what is covered in the papers. This list is illustrative rather than exhaustive. In addition to the following projects, COBEC partners also took part in numerous faculty and student exchanges. American partners would often arrange for Belizean students attending participating institutions, to receive out-of-state tuition waivers. Many COBEC partners also launched study abroad programs in Belize. *[Note: If you do projects in COBEC please send in your documents to the Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections.]*

- 1.) The External Moderation Project. Beginning in 1992 the University College of Belize requested that US faculty from COBEC institutions review and critique courses and syllabi.
- 2.) SAP Workshop. Valdosta State University partnered with Pride Belize to hold a Student Assistance Program workshop. First in April 1993, and then again in 1994 a workshop was held in Belize City to give training in counseling techniques to Student Assistance teachers.
- 3.) Physical Best. The program ran from May 24- June 11, 1993, and was held in Belize. It was a faculty development program for Belize primary school teachers designed to train them in the physical education and assessment program Physical Best. These teachers would in turn introduce the program to other teachers. The purpose of the Physical Best program was to teach knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop a lifelong habit of physical fitness. COBEC partner involved: New Mexico State University. Faculty: Lawrence C. Rohner.
- 4.) Tropical Ecology. Beginning in 1993 several American COBEC Partners held Tropical Ecology courses in Belize. Included institutions were: Kennesaw State University, Valdosta State University, and Murray State University, as well as Belizean partner University College of Belize. These were typically summer courses, which explored the history, culture, and biology of Belize. In 1995 COBEC donated \$500 for the purchase of tents, to be used by COBEC members for the Tropical Ecology Program.
- 5.) From 1993 several COBEC partners were involved in internships in Belize, including students from SUNY Cortland, Colorado State University, University College of Belize, and the University of North Florida.
- 6.) Study of ATLIB Associate Degree Program. February 7-11, 1994. The purpose of this was to assemble a three-person team to conduct a study. This study would analyze ATLIB Associate Programs and use this information to help develop some sort of standardization across institutions.
- 7.) ATLIB Registration/ Record Keeping Project. COBEC granted \$1000 to hire a consultant from Murray State to review and revise record keeping in ATLIB institutions. The goal was to format a uniform computerized system for record-keeping that could be used throughout ATLIB institutions, and enable easier cross-institutional records exchanges, as well as more accurately track students from registration to graduation. COBEC granted the funds at the November 7, 1994 meeting.
- 8.) February 3, 1995 COBEC granted Corozal Junior College a \$500(US) Grant to acquire library holdings in Spanish and Maya, as well as an additional \$250(US) to copy and bind some of the University of Belize's holdings.

- 9.) Belize Master's Degree Program in Education. The University of North Florida developed this for Belizean students wherein classes would be taken in Belize and at the University of North Florida on an alternating basis. This program began in 1996.
- 10.) In 1996 Valdosta State College assisted Belmopan Junior College in choosing course materials.
- 11.) Images of Belize. Betty Flinchum from the University of North Florida developed an orientation video entitled "Images of Belize". In 1996 COBEC granted \$500 for the production and distribution of this film.
- 12.) Metropolitan Community College set up a satellite dish at the Center for Employment Training in Cayo on May 17, 1996 for the purpose of broadcasting classes to all Belizean institutions.
- 13.) Small Scale Science Project. COBEC granted \$800 to Colorado State University and Front Range Community College for this project. In November of 1996 forty-one Belizean Physical Science teachers were trained to use small scale science methods in teaching laboratory sections. This introduced helpful, cost-effective methods of teaching science.
- 14.) Metropolitan Community College welcomed educators from Belize School of Nursing in July 1997 for a shadowing experience that allowed an exchange of information between the two institutions.
- 15.) Colorado State University, University College of Belize, and the Belize Ministry of Natural Resources sponsored an international conference on the Human Dimensions of Natural Resource Management in February 1997. Two hundred natural resource professionals attended.
- 16.) The University of North Florida and the University College of Belize collaborated on an Interdisciplinary Conference held in Belize in March 1997.
- 17.) COBEC granted \$600 to Daphne Durham of Valdosta State University to hold a workshop for ATLIB representatives on advising Belizean students who wish to study in the United States. This was held March 13, 1997 at the University College of Belize.
- 18.) Dream School Belize. In the summer of 1997 Sheryl Nussbaum Beach of Valdosta State University conducted a three-week summer school for children ages four to eight in Belize, with Belize Teacher's College. The purpose of this was to display a thematic approach to teaching. She was assisted by a student from VSU. COBEC awarded a small grant to fund the project.
- 19.) IALAC Project. Identifying and Accommodating Learning Disabled Children. A two day workshop to instruct educators in how to identify learning disabled children and teach strategies to accommodate them. This project was proposed and enacted by Dr. Carolyn Stone from the University of North Florida, and assisted by 5 UNF/UCB Master's program students. The workshop was held at Muffles Junior College December 17 and 18, 1997.
- 20.) Valdosta State University College of Education held a Student Teaching abroad program in 1998. Faculty involved: Dr. William Frech.
- 21.) The University of Belize and New Mexico State University participated in an International Student Teaching Exchange in 1998.

- 22.) The University of South Florida held a USAID sponsored health management training program for officials in the Belize Ministry of Health in the fall of 1998.
- 23.) In 1999 Valdosta State College placed 19 nursing students in nursing centers in Cayo, Corozal, and Orange Walk.
- 24.) In 2000 Valdosta State University conducted a summer field school in Anthropology and Sociology in Belize involving two faculty and eighteen students.
- 25.) In 2000 the University Of South Florida: College Of Education partnered with the Belize Ministry of Education and Sports to establish the Belize Information Resource Network. The purpose of this network was to aid with hardware, internet access, distance learning, and information systems.
- 26.) In February 2000 Dr. Michael Morgan of Murray State University assisted the Regional Learning Center at the University College of Belize in conducting a workshop for fifty teachers in Cayo, concerning computer assisted language learning.
- 27.) National Writing Project in Belize. In summer 2001 Valdosta State College sponsored a workshop in which South Georgian and Belizean teachers taught each other about the writing process. A Graduate Student from Valdosta State was involved.
- 28.) July 2001 COBEC formed the CFACT committee (COBEC College Fair & ATLIB Counselor Training Committee). The purpose of which was to plan and manage a yearly college fair, as well as to manage graduate student recruitment and professional development for ATLIB counselors.
- 29.) CAFÉ Workshops. Implemented in May of 2002 CAFÉ workshops are professional development workshops for Belizean college faculty and administrators. They supply a general framework for Belizean and US institutions to work together for the purpose of faculty development and instructional improvements. Workshops often address varying themes. Originally developed by Valdosta State University, Georgia College and State University, and held at Muffles College in Belize, they are widely attended by faculty from various Belizean schools.
- 30.) Trustee Initiative. Conceived and implemented in summer 2002, by Belizean Institutions and Hillsborough Community College. Higher education leaders in Belize and the US come together as a cohort group for training and to interact with counterparts from other countries.
- 31.) Summer 2002 Saint John's College and Viterbo University held a joint faculty development experience. 10 days in June 2002 eight VU faculty paired with SJC faculty as peer partners. The purpose was to share teaching and scholarship interests.
- 32.) October 2002 Dr. Wallace Koehler of Valdosta State University conducted a workshop in Belize for library assistants at the University of Belize.
- 33.) Belize Cohort MAT. Georgia College and State University offered a Master's of Arts in Teaching to ATLIB instructors to help them achieve their Master's in a timely and cost-effective manner. Began in fall 2003 classes were offered in both Belize and at GCSU.
- 34.) Early Childhood/Special Education. In spring 2004 two faculty accompanied students from Valdosta State University's Early Childhood/Special Education program to involve themselves with Belmopan schools, and conduct workshops in special education.

35.) Began in 2004 at Muffles Junior College and Sacred Heart Junior College the Summer Institute project brought community college professors from the United States to teach during the summer in Belize's junior colleges. This helps meet the need for depth in a particular discipline that may be lacking in the junior college faculties.

36.) Oklahoma State University launched a doctoral program in Belize July 2007.

37.) A grant was given to Paula Chambers of Bainbridge University to hold four workshops on instruction and experience with hands-on science teaching methods for primary and elementary teachers. This was held March 8-10, 2011 with Corozal Junior College faculty and students in attendance as well as.

38.) \$1,500 grant was granted by COBEC to Sacred Heart Junior College for a professional development opportunity. Dean Jorge Aldana of SJC shadowed Dr. Rick Bateman Jr. of Sowela Technical Community College August 9-17, 2012 in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

39.) A Small Grant was given to support the training of the Registrar of the University of Belize. Dr. Amelia Williams visited Gainesville September 3-14, 2012, for a shadowing experience.

Appendix F
 Categorization of COBEC's Projects and Programs

Projects/ Programs	Category					
	Curriculum Dev.	Graduate Education	Library Dev	Professional Dev	Study Abroad	Technology Dev
#1	*					
#2				*		
#3				*TE		
#4					*	
#5					*	
#6	*					
#7						*
#8			*			
#9		*				
#10	*					
#11						*
#12						*
#13				*TE		
#14				*NE		
#15				*		
#16				*		
#17				*SA		
#18				*TE		
#19				*TE		
#20					*	
#21				*		
#22				*		
#23					*	
#24					*	
#25						*
#26				*TE		
#27				*TE		
#28?						
#29				*		
#30				*		
#31				*TE		
#32			*			
#33		*				
#34				*TE		
#35				*TE		
#36		*				
#37				*TE		
#38				*		
#39				*		
TOTALS	3	3	2	21	5	4

Appendix G

COBEC Publications, Grants, and Media

Publications:

“Education in Belize: A Profile”, Harrington, Tracy and Adrian Leiva. COBEC, 1999.

Van Der Eyken, Goulden and Michael Crossley, “Evaluating Educational Reform in a Small State”, University of Bristol, 1998.

Smith, Flinchum, Mahung, Thompson, “Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation Projects”, Published in conference Proceedings, University of Bristol, United Kingdom, 1998.

COBEC Newsletters, 1992-2016.

SPEAR and UCB Journal of Belizean Affairs articles, 1996-?

Grants:

“Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation Education Projects”, large grant submitted to USAID, 1991, (not funded).

Media/Internet:

“COBEC Tour of Belize”, (Audio DVD), University of North Florida, R. Hanson, videographer, 1995.


COBEC web site, 2000-2016.

Dissertation:

Christopher Ihesiaba Nnoduechi, Nontraditional Graduate Students Satisfaction with their Transitional Education Experience, (unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of North Florida, Jacksonville, 2013.

Appendix H

Belize Visitor 8-Question Survey


2016 Visitor Survey

We hope that your stay in Belize was a pleasant and rewarding experience. Before you leave, would you kindly complete this questionnaire as accurately as you can. Only one questionnaire should be filled per family, household or couple.

If you are unable to report your expenditure in United States Dollars, please feel free to report it in the currency of your preference.

This information you provide will help us to better plan and develop our tourism industry.

Please place a check mark next to your response. Please **PRINT** clearly.

FOR OFFICIAL USE

MONTH

PORT

ENUMERATOR ID

SERIAL

INCOMPLETE

ADMINISTERED

DATE _____
Month/Day/Year

1. Where do you live permanently?

1. USA Name of State _____

2. Canada Name of Province _____

3. Europe Name of Country _____

4. Caribbean Name of Country _____

5. Central America Name of Country _____

9. Other Name of Country _____

2. Which of the following best describes your occupation?

1. Foreign employee of embassy, consular office or international organization based in Belize

2. Dependent of foreign employee of embassy, consular office or international organization based in Belize

3. Foreign military personnel or foreign student based or studying in Belize

4. Seasonal or border worker

9. None of the above

3. How many nights did you spend in Belize?

nights

4. What was the main purpose of your visit?

1. Holiday, leisure or recreation

2. Business/Official

3. Visit Friends/Relatives

4. Religion/Health/Education

9. Other (specify) _____

5. Where did you stay while in Belize? Tick all that apply.

01. Hotel/Resort

02. Guest-house

03. Own vacation house

04. Rented house/apartment

05. Friend/Relative

06. Fishing Lodge

07. Boat/Live-aboard vessel

08. Camping

09. Time-share unit

99. Other (specify) _____

Appendix I

COBEC'S Informed Consent Form & Interview Protocol

Interview Informed Consent Message

Dear COBEC Member:

I want to thank you for taking the time to participate in this evaluation of COBEC. My name is _____ and I would like to talk to you about your experiences in COBEC. We are assessing the effectiveness of COBEC and its impact on Belize and US tertiary institutions. The information we collect will be aggregated and analyzed to identify COBEC's programs, processes, and activities that have worked well and those in need of enhancement.

The interview should take less than an hour. With your permission I would like to audiotape this interview. All responses will be kept confidential. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law and your identity will not be revealed in the final manuscript.

There are no anticipated risks, compensation or other direct benefits to you as a participant in this interview. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate and may discontinue your participation in the interview at any time without consequence.

If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact Dr. Emilia Hodge at 352-392-7865. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant rights may be directed to the IRB02 office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611; (352) 392-0433.

By participating in this interview, you give me permission to report your responses anonymously in the final manuscript.

Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time. Are there any questions about what I have just explained? Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Interviewee

Witness

Date

Project: An Evaluation of the Impact of COBEC on Belize and US Tertiary Education Institutions

Date of Interview: _____

Name of Interviewee: _____

Position of Interviewee: _____

Interview Began: _____

Interview Ended: _____

Interviewer: _____

Introduction

Before beginning the interview, explain the following:

1. The purposes of the evaluation study: The purposes of this evaluation are to (a) document the work of COBEC in Belize and the US; (b) examine the impact of COBEC on Belizean and US education institutions; and (c) facilitate understanding about COBEC and its policies, programs, and activities.

2. The purpose of this interview. The purposes of this interview are to (a) learn about your experiences as a founding member of COBEC; (b) learn about your perspectives on whether COBEC has achieved or is achieving its stated purpose and mission; and (c) give you the opportunity to describe what you believe COBEC's future imperatives, policies, programs, and activities should be.

3. Why you were chosen. Because you are a founding member of COBEC and have actively participated in its growth and development.

4. Confidentiality. The information from the interview will be kept in the strictest confidence. Unless you indicated otherwise, your name will not be used in the final report.

5. How the information will be used. Responses from all interviewees will be aggregated and analyzed with no reference to individuals by name. Results from the study will be used highlight COBEC's achievements over the years and enhance current policies, programs and activities. The final report will be disseminated and shared with past and present members of COBEC.

6. Time. The interview should take 30 to 45 minutes to complete.

7. Questions or Concerns. Should you have questions or concerns about the evaluation study, please contact Dr. Emilia M. Hodge at the University of Florida. Her telephone number is 352-226-5427 and her email address is emhodge@ufl.edu. (Be sure to ask permission to record the interview.)

8. Interviewee's Background. I would like to begin by asking you to tell us about yourself and how you became involved with COBEC.

- a. How many years have you been a member of COBEC?
- b. What motivated or influenced you to join COBEC?
- c. As far as your involvement with COBEC,
 - o What positions did you hold?
 - o What roles did you play?
 - o What are some of your activities that contributed to COBEC's growth and development?
- d. How have these experiences influenced your personal and professional life?
- e. What is your status (position or title) in COBEC?
- f. What is your current professional position?

Purpose Questions

1. To what extent do you believe that COBEC has linked post-secondary education institutions in Belize and outside Belize?

2. How have the linkages strengthened and expanded Belize's capabilities in higher education?

3. To what extent do you believe COBEC has increased international collaboration between member institutions?

4. To what extent do you think COBEC has promoted better understanding between cultures?

Mission Questions

5. From your perspective, kindly explain the extent to which you believe COBEC has been successful in fulfilling the following mission tasks.

- a. Facilitating collaboration in research, teaching, curricular and library development. Example(s)?
- b. Promoting faculty, staff and student exchanges among member institutions. Example(s)?
- c. Implementing systematic and comprehensive planning of educational development efforts. Example(s)?
- d. Developing human and financial resources to assist in meeting Belizean needs in higher education? Example(s)?
- e. Identifying financial aid for students. Example(s)?
- f. Advancing the professionalization of Belizean higher education? Example(s)?
- g. Encourage study abroad programs in Belize for faculty, staff and students? Example(s)?

6. To what extent do you believe COBEC has been unsuccessful in achieving its goals?

7. Since its inception, what would you identify as COBEC's most substantive accomplishments? Why?

- a. Relative to policies?
- b. Relative to programs?
- c. Relative to activities?
- d. Relative to membership/individuals?

Quality Measures

8. How have you been impacted as a result of participating in COBEC's programs and activities?

9. How have you used the information knowledge and skills gained through your participation in COBEC?

10. Would you recommend COBEC to others? Please explain.

11. What would you identify as COBEC's major challenges and concerns?

12. What suggestions or recommendations would you make to address these challenges and concerns?

13. What other individual(s) should we interview for this assessment study?

15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO TALK WITH ME. I APPRECIATE THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE GIVEN ME AND WILL BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE AT THIS TIME.

Appendix J

Compiled Text Passages coded with 'Collaboration and Partnership' for P1

Document: P1
Weight: 3
Position: 4 - 4
Code: I. PROFESSIONALIZATION\Collaboration and Partnerships

A number of training programs that we are offering in Belize are partnered. It's not just US going down and offering something, it's actually a collaborative at faculty for those programs. We use Belize faculty as much as US faculty. In fact, the first time I offered a program in Belize, we had a US faculty member partnered with a-- you took some of those courses. We had a Belize faculty member and a US faculty member teaching the course. The idea still is, I think, to have collaborative degrees, US and Belize institutions offering the degrees together - the same degree.

Document: P1
Weight: 3
Position: 4 - 4
Code: I. PROFESSIONALIZATION\Collaboration and Partnerships

Teaching, you mentioned the master's program that UNF worked on and then the collaborative teaching between Belizean and US faculty members.

Document: P1
Weight: 3
Position: 4 - 4
Code: I. PROFESSIONALIZATION\Collaboration and Partnerships

Curriculum, you talked about helping the Belize institutions develop their curriculum, their catalog of courses that would also include the pre-professional courses you talked about helping the Belize institutions develop their curriculum, their catalog of courses that would also include the pre-professional courses necessary for transfer to a US university.

Document: P1
Weight: 3
Position: 4 - 4
Code: I. PROFESSIONALIZATION\Collaboration and Partnerships

I haven't touched on library, but I'll give you an example there. When UCB was formed and inaugurated in '89, it was just at the time when COBEC was also working. We had lots of grants and so on. One of the grants from Valdosta, for example, was a librarian sent to UB and helped set-- the librarians in Belize set up the library at that new institution. We've done the same kind of library assistance with now the University of Belize, we've done it in the tertiary institutions who have asked for library assistance.

Document: P1

Weight: 2

Position: 4 - 4

Code: I. PROFESSIONALIZATION\Collaboration and Partnerships

In large part, many of the libraries in Belize, in Belize institutions, were facilitated or enhanced by librarians from COBEC institutions. That is one we didn't touch on, but should have, probably.

Document: P1

Weight: 3

Position: 4 - 4

Code: I. PROFESSIONALIZATION\Collaboration and Partnerships

There's a great deal of nursing training. We've actually exchanged nurses and done a lot of training in the nursing field. Especially Valdosta has had an exchange, a nursing exchange. We've done a lot of shadowing for administrators, and we've sent auditors down and received auditors up at UNF to get some training in how to facilitate an audit within a school.

Appendix K

Compiled Text Passages Coded with 'Link Post-Secondary Institutions' for P 5

Document: P5
Weight: 2
Position: 4 - 4
Code: II. INTERNATIONALIZATION \Link Post-Secondary Institutions In and Out Belize

Well, Bennie, I believe that COBEC has been very effective, and it grew as an organization to serve US and Belize educational institutions more completely and to move along as its mission has changed and developed and strengthened as it has grown as an organization. I think taking into account how difficult it is for an international organization that's really run by volunteers and doesn't have a central office and has a tiny budget, you just think that, that is so small and the incredible accomplishments that COBEC has had over the last 10, 15 years so I think it has done a lot. And probably the primary thing is to link post-secondary educational institutions in Belize and in the United States primarily.

Document: P5
Weight: 2
Position: 4 - 4
Code: II. INTERNATIONALIZATION \Link Post-Secondary Institutions In and Out Belize

I think taking into account how difficult it is for an international organization that's really run by volunteers and doesn't have a central office and has a tiny budget, you just think that, that is so small and the incredible accomplishments that COBEC has had over the last 10, 15 years so I think it has done a lot. And probably the primary thing is to link post-secondary educational institutions in Belize and in the United States primarily.

Document: P5
Weight: 2
Position: 4 - 4
Code: II. INTERNATIONALIZATION \Link Post-Secondary Institutions In and Out Belize

Well, I think the linkages are at many different levels in universities, where faculty get together between a Belize school and a US school, and also where students get together and learn from each other about their programs. Administrative staff get together and link and talk about things and move forward. So there are many different ways where the institutions hearts touch each other as they are growing. Belize is a developing nation and it is going through all kinds of growth pains as a developing organization as any place, and it's been an opportunity for US schools to help with that process and also for the process which happened on many of the Belize campuses, has given information and cultural insights, the people that are not in Belize but the

United States.

Document: P5
Weight: 2
Position: 4 - 4
Code: II. INTERNATIONALIZATION \Link Post-Secondary Institutions In and Out Belize

Administrative staff get together and link and talk about things and move forward.

Document: P5
Weight: 2
Position: 4 - 4
Code: II. INTERNATIONALIZATION \Link Post-Secondary Institutions In and Out Belize

I think that--we have time here--I think professionalism and its advancement in the years that I've been in Belize has increased many folds. I think in associating universities together it gives the Belize Institution a perspective on maybe an aspirational level to say, "Gosh our university is great right now, but it wouldn't take much to take it to the next level."

Appendix L

Tables with Definition of Category Characteristics and Weighted Values

Table 18.2

Definition of the Category 'Facilitate Collaboration in Research, Teaching, Curricular, and Library Development' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulated	'And the whole idea of teaching on the tertiary level, and the exposure I think is important.'
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> activity(ties) that facilitate research, teaching, curricular, or library development	Expression of a b/sentiment with no examples of activity(ies) that facilitate research, teaching, curricular, and library development <u>or</u> example(s) with no sentiment expressed	'Well, I'm not sure I know about those. But I think COBEC has probably been least effective, although somewhat effective with regards to research.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment <u>and</u> collaborative activity(ies) that facilitate research, teaching, curricular, library development	Specific, clear b/sentiment <u>and</u> example of activity(ies) that facilitate collaboration, in research, teaching, curricular, or library development	'I know at Sacred Heart, they had a study abroad course and it was a requirement that one faculty from Belize work alongside the faculty from UNF...and they delivered a very good package of science education.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.3

Definition of the Category 'Promote Faculty, Staff, and Student Exchanges' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulate	'Administrative staff get together and link and talk about things and move forward. So, there are many different ways to where the institutions hearts touch each other as they are growing.'
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment or activity(ies) that promote faculty, staff, and student exchanges	Expression of a b/sentiment with no example of activity(ies) that promote faculty, staff, and student exchanges <u>or</u> example(s) with no sentiment expressed	'I think it's been extremely successful there. I think large numbers of Belizeans are through various contacts made in COBEC have attended institutions in the United States and many institutions.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment and activity(ies) that promote faculty, staff, or student exchanges	Specific, clear b/sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) of activity(ies) that promote faculty, staff, or student have exchange	'When I accepted the position at _____, one of the first things people wanted to do was to COBEC membership and to start producing study abroad and exchange programs with the schools in Belize. AND we did that, and they were so successful that we had several students every semester in an exchange and study abroad program, primarily with UB, but with other schools in Belize also.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.4

Definition of the Category 'Implement Systematic and Comprehensive Planning' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulated	'To that context I developed a connection with COBEC. I was involved with the organization of the first meetings trying to figure out what kind of organization it should be.'
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> activity(ies) that implement implement systematic and comprehensive	Expression of a b/sentiment with no example(s) of activity(ies) that implement systematic and comprehensive planning <u>or</u> example(s) with no sentiment expressed	'I think that has been a failure, and overall. There have been a lot of documents written and a lot of talk of systematic planning, more and more administrators and faculty have learned about strategic planning and all those kinds of concepts. But as far as implementation....'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment <u>and</u> activity(ies) that implement systematic and comprehensive planning	Specific, clear b/sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) of activity(ies) that implement systematic and comprehensive planning	'And I know this happened along the way. One, when Santos Mahung was the president at the University of Belize, he contacted Betty Flinchum, Tracy Harrington, Keith Mizer, myself, and Jim Murray...Jim is from Murray State. I can't think of his— Jim McCoy—to serve as a Consulting team as they were working and developing their new strategic plan for the university. I felt that this was a good chance for COBEC to wk with people from the University of Belize. And Santos had a good approach because he was involving the administration and he was involving outside input from those institutions like UNF, Valdosta, Murray State, Hawaii.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.5

Definition of the Category 'Develop Human and Financial Resources' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear or sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulated	'Well, I'm not sure I know about all those. But I think COBEC has probably least effective, although somewhat effective with regard to research. There have been a few research that it's done by Belize institutions, so that got some training in doing research.'
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> activity(ies) that develop human/financial resources	Expression of a b/sentiment with no example(s) of activity(ies) that develop human/financial resources <u>or</u> example(s) with no sentiment expressed	'But also for our faculty it's been a wonderful staff development, professional development experience in our outreach program.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment <u>and</u> activity(ies) that develop human/financial resources	Specific, clear b/sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) of activity(ies) that develop human/financial resources	'Staff development has been a big think, I think. The café workshops, for example, still going in Belize. They are a training place. They use Belizeans and US trainers for things: computer skills, all kinds of skills that are becoming a necessity for educational institutions. So as the need emerges, COBEC rises to the occasion, and begins to address that need. That's one of the joys of COBEC, I think, it's always been like that.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.6

Definition of the Category 'Identify Financial Aid for Students' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulated	'Okay. Okay. Like the financial resources on the Belizean side may not be there to promote some activities that might be beneficial for Belizean students and Belizean faculty.'
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> activity(ies) that identify financial aid for students	Expression of a sentiment with no example(s) of activity(ies) that identify financial aid for students <u>or</u> examples with no sentiment expressed	'I tried to encourage them to send us graduate students. Then we find them assistant-ships and they automatically got the in-state waver.' It was very hard to do for undergraduates. I know maybe some of the other institutions in COBEC can do it easily but we couldn't. We just had restrictions that we had to deal with so we found a way around it.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment and activity(ies) that identify financial aid for students	Expression of a sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) of activity(ies) that identify financial aid for students	'I put in a large number of special letters because what I tried to do was get students who apply to our institutions --if they got admitted, I would contact a scholarship potential place and really be an advocate for them to get the scholarship. For every one that I did, I got almost everyone. But the effort was immense to get the one scholarship, but I tried to do two or three a year where I could call or even visit, or write letters of support for someone that was trying to get [a scholarship]. And OES was is an example of one of those things.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.7

Definition of the Category 'Advance Professionalization of Belize Higher Education' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulated	'To me, the opportunity to meet professionals in the field that you are—unfortunately I think in COBEC we have—the people who come are mostly from the c.' education faculties and from international programs.'
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> activity(ies) that advance professionalization of Belize higher education	Expression of a b/sentiment with no examples of activity(ies) that advance professionalization of Belize higher education <u>or</u> examples with no sentiment expressed	'At UB we are not working towards accreditation to any of the US body, but the Ministry of Education has just launched a whole thrust towards the National Accreditation Council. And I believe we will start form there.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment <u>and</u> activity(ies) that advance professionalization of Belize higher education	Specific, clear b/sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) of activity(ies) that advance professionalization of Belize higher education	'There's been a lot of professional development opportunities where various UNF people, as well as Belizean educators involved in COBEC, have offered to teachers in the country. But I think the greatest, truly the greatest were the graduate degrees offered then and through COBEC, as well as master's Degrees offered through COBEC. That's had a tremendous impact on the development of education in Belize because it provided so many graduate-trained teachers, principals, and post-secondary institutions leaders.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.8

Definition of the Category 'Encourage Study Aboard Programs' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear or sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulated	No prototypical example
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> activity(s) that encourage study abroad programs in Belize for faculty and students	Expression of a b/sentiment with no examples of activity(ies) that encourage study abroad programs in Belize for faculty and students <u>or</u> example(s) with no sentiment	'But that partnership still exists. Every year LSU students come down to Wesley Junior College and we set up a program for them... Their students get to do a study abroad course that is facilitated by Wesley Junior College.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment and activity(ies) that encourage study abroad in programs in Belize for faculty and students	Specific, clear b/sentiment and example of activity(ies) that encourage study abroad programs in Belize for faculty and students	'I know at Sacred Heart, they had a study abroad course and it was a requirement that one faculty from Belize work side the faculty from UNF... and they delivered a very good package of science education.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.9

Definition of the Category 'Link Post-Secondary Education Institutions in and Outside Belize' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear or sentiment <u>and</u> example are not articulated	'I think before we used to just have mostly institutional reports where we go around the table, and each institution would take time to see what they had done in Belize for the past year or whatever the timing was they were reporting on, and after a while those became same old, and they took long.'
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> activity(s) that link post-secondary education institutions in/outside Belize in/outside Belize	Expression of a b/sentiment with no example(s) of activity(ies) that link post-secondary institutions in/outside Belize <u>or</u> example(s) with no sentiment expressed	'I think significantly. I couldn't put a quantitative answer to that question. But I think institutions in Belize had didn't have connections abroad now. Smaller US institutions, primarily, who have much going on in other parts of the world are very linked with Belize now.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment <u>and</u> activity(ies) that link post-secondary education institutions in/outside Belize	Specific, clear sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) of activity(ies) that link post-secondary institutions in/outside Belize	'Smaller US institutions, primarily, who didn't have much going on in other parts of the world are very linked with Belize now. So, there has been a significant impact. And concretely, lots of workshops were done for faculty in Belize. Faculty exchange programs Started with institutions. Library development has been A feature from the beginning, and a lot of library work with librarians going to Belize, and Belize librarians coming up to American institutions.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.10

Definition of the Category 'Linkages Strengthened/Expanded Belize Capabilities' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulated	No prototypical example
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> linkages that have strengthened/expanded Belize's capabilities	Expression of a sentiment with no example(s) of linkages that have strengthened/expanded Belize's capabilities <u>or</u> example(s) with no sentiment expressed	'Yes. Certainly. There's this annual conference that is being held where there is exchange between our local institutions and US institutions. Such exchange do result in our local institutions to be better equipped to develop their programs and implement programs.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment <u>and</u> linkages that have strengthened/expanded Belize's capabilities	Specific, clear sentiment ' Yes. <u>and</u> example(s) of linkages that have strengthened/expanded Belize's capabilities	I guess COBEC now would have significant number of students with degrees from of the world are very linked the US. They've facilitated, I know at UNF, over 500 degrees for students living and working in Belize. If you take the Number of institutions who have been in COBEC and who've given that same courtesy to the students of instate tuition, that's significant not only in human capital, but in monetary resources invested at Belize by the US.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.11

Definition of the Category 'Increase International Collaboration' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulated	No prototypical example
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> activity(ies) that increase international collaboration between member institutions	Expression of a b/sentiment with no examples of activity(ies) that increase international collaboration between member institutions <u>or</u> example with no sentiment expressed	'As I say, the programs in the area that COBEC has done the best, has been educational programs, study abroad, research programs, it's had faculty exchanges. It has an immense number of things, the size, the complexity of the group that it's been able to carry on in the program dimension.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment and activity(ies) that increase international collaboration between member institutions	Expression of a sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) of activity(ies) that increase international collaboration between member institutions	'There's been a great deal of nursing training. We've actually exchanged nurses and done a lot of training in the nursing field. Especially Valdosta has an exchange, a nursing exchange. We've done a lot of shadowing for administrators, and we've sent auditors down and received auditors up at UNF to get some training in how to facilitate an audit within a school.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.12

Definition of the Category 'Promote Better Understanding Between Cultures' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulated	'I guess I'll mention this all a bit later again, but to not really COBEC always as, COBEC doing something because of Belize schools and students, they trying to balance good things and global organization can do to help each other.'
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> activity(ies) that promote better understanding between cultures	Expression of a sentiment with no example(s) of activity(ies) that promote better understanding between cultures <u>or</u> example(s) with no sentiment expressed	'We do have situation when our students go to the US through home stays at the university offering visits, excursions to various parts of the US, and certainly when the US professors come to Belize, and even students who might want to do their internship here in Belize, do benefit from that cultural exchange.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment <u>and</u> activity(ies) that promote better understanding between cultures	Specific, clear sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) of activity(ies) that promote better understanding between cultures	'I think they do a fairly good job in cultural events. I still remember the Dangriga one that Karen Martinez did, down there with events that we had. She does a great job. Jose' Amai did a great job at Corozal. There's always a cultural event attached to the conference itself, and I think that that's important for those who attend.'

*b/sentiment = Belief or sentiment

Table 18.13

Definition of the Category 'Address Challenges' with Three Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Prototypical Example
1: Unable to classify category	Participant's response is unclear <u>and</u> example(s) are not articulated	'Yeah. The brain drain is a huge problem. When you have the political dynamic reinforcing that, it's really bad.'
2: Moderately representative of a sentiment <u>or</u> activity(ies) that address challenges	Expression of a sentiment with no example(s) of activity(ies) that address challenges <u>or</u> examples with no sentiment expressed	'Go back to the original goals of the faculty exchanges with research, joint research, student exchanges, study abroad activities. Those were the four original aims of OBEC. And we have to look at the Weaknesses and develop those And that is what I should have said to _____.'
3: Highly representative of a sentiment <u>and</u> activity(ies) that promote better understanding between cultures	Specific, clear sentiment <u>and</u> example(s) of activity(ies) that address challenges	'I think we should spend more time on trying to raise money scholarships for Belize students. To be able to go to school. Many universities right now are spending thousands of dollars on fundraising, and if we could have a fund raising dimension in COBEC, I think it would be a great thing to have.'