



THE EVOLUTION OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN BELIZE AND THE IMPACT OF COBEC: 1988-2018

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COBEC WINTER CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 1, 2018

WESLEY JUNIOR COLLEGE

HIGHER EDUCATION IN 1988

A two-tiered system

- University College of Belize (UCB)(under Ferris State College, and the UWI Open Campus
- EJC, CJC, SJCJC, School of Nursing, College of Agriculture, Teachers College, Technical College

A 2+2 system

- In the newly Independent Belize, grant funding had become available from USAID and USIA for inter-institutional collaboration between US and Belizean institutions
- Several US institutions were working on funded projects with the Ministry of Education, UCB, and the Belize Teachers Training College
- Recognized need for coordination and rationalization on educational development in partnership

COBEC 1988

- A “bi-national effort recognizing the value of international educational exchange and the benefits of collaborative efforts” which committed its membership to “cooperative development of educational programs and activities in Belize
- A focus on teacher education as well as on other educational programs

AIMS OF COBEC

- To disseminate knowledge and information relative to the development of education and to each member's activities in Belize
- To collaborate in research, teaching, curriculum and library development
- To facilitate the transfer of students
- To promote faculty, staff and student exchanges

AIMS OF COBEC ...

- To support and encourage systematic and comprehensive educational development
- To assist in the acquisition of resources required to meet expressed needs of higher education institutions in Belize
- To solicit funds for COBEC activities

EMERGENCE OF ATLIB 1989

- To promote and actively participate in the development of relevant quality tertiary education consistent with the needs of the people of Belize

AIMS OF ATLIB

- To facilitate networking towards an integrated system of post-secondary education in Belize
- To promote the development of relevant curricula for Belize at various levels and for specific needs
- To promote the professional development of the faculty of ATLIB institutions through training, seminars, scholarships etc

AIMS OF ATLIB

- To facilitate the transfer of credit among institutions of ATLIB
- To facilitate the international recognition of ATLIB programs of study and the eventual accreditation of member institutions

THE LAST 30 YEARS ...

- Increased access to tertiary education across the country – new JCs
 - 1992 & 1995: Branch campuses of UCB in Belmopan and Punta Gorda --- BJC and TJC
 - 1992: Muffles Junior College (MJC), Orange Walk Town
 - 1999: Sacred Heart College Junior College (SHJC), San Ignacio
 - 1999: Belize Adventist Junior College (BAJC). Calcutta, Corozal

THE LAST 30 YEARS ...

- 2000: San Pedro Junior College, Ambergris Caye, 2003: Wesley Junior College, Belize City
- 2007: Independence Junior College (IJC), Independence, Toledo
- 2007: Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College (CEMJC), San Roman, Corozal
- 2013: Blessed John Paul II, Benque Viejo, Cayo

EMERGENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE - 2000

- Amalgamation of ---
 - The University College of Belize and its two JCs
 - The Belize School of Nursing
 - The Belize College of Agriculture
 - The Belize Teachers Training College
 - The Belize Technical College

2003 --- GALEN UNIVERSITY

- ... a private Belizean university chartered by the Government of Belize to offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of disciplines to Belizeans and non-Belizeans

CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF BELIZEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

- 3 universities --- one private, one regional, one public
- 8 Junior Colleges --- some public, some denominational, all but one grant-aided

ATLIB AS ADVOCATE AND PROACTIVE FORCE FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION

Accreditation and Quality Assurance

- 2000 CARICOM Mandate that each member state should establish a national accrediting body
- 2004 Bill to establish the National Accreditation Council
- Commitment of ATLIB to promote Quality Assurance
 - Membership in CANQATE
 - Participation in CANQATE conferences
 - Annual (now biannual) Professional Development for all ATLIB faculty and staff
 - ATLIB placement exam for English and Math

ATLIB ADVOCACY AND PROACTIVITY ...

Planning

- Strategic Planning for ATLIB ... (2007, 2013, 2017)
- ... and for the development of Tertiary Education in Belize
- *A Draft Higher Education Policy ... proposed to guide the strategic long term planning and management of Belizean higher education.*
- National Articulation Framework (NAF)
- Organized inter-varsity sports, participation in national debates etc ...

COBEC'S IMPACT

- Faculty and staff development for Belizean institutions
 - Access to graduate education in a variety of programs at all levels of the system, but especially secondary and tertiary
 - Access to graduate education for educational leaders and policy makers
 - CAFE workshops in targeted areas
 - Administrator workshops during summer meetings
 - Ongoing QA training

COBEC'S IMPACT

- Some Faculty exchanges (ECU's Gay Wilentz for UCB's English faculty)
- Library development
- Transfer of students to the US
- Networking of institutions and institutional leaders

BUT ...

*..... could we have achieved some of this
without COBEC?*

..... could we have had a greater impact?

BUT ...

*..... could we have achieved some of this
without COBEC?*

WHAT WE COULD DO BETTER

- Collaborate on teaching, research and curriculum development
- Share knowledge and information relative to the development of higher education in Belize
- Encourage systematic and comprehensive planning for educational development

WHAT WE CAN DO

- Engage the Ministry of Education more meaningfully in COBEC
 - Have representation within our MEMBERSHIP of:
 - Teacher Education Development Services
 - Employment, Training and Education Services (ETES)

“COBEC” should be seen and treated as a vital resource within the MOE! And COBEC should regard itself as being the MOE’s natural partner in its planning.

WHAT WE CAN DO...

- Reformat our meetings ... so that we can meet our *raison d'être* of collaboration on educational development
- Work on membership retention
- Establish a coordinating mechanism that ensures follow through and COBEC activity between meetings
 - Shared Secretariat with ATLIB?
- PLAN for our future success and WORK the plan