

Report on visit to the University of Missouri

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the UM-UWC exchange program for making it possible for me to visit UM in March 2017.

The following report uses the questions provided in the UM-UWC exchange template:

i. What were the objectives of your visit?

The objectives of my visit were the following:

1. To share information about the implementation of multimodal literacies and pedagogies and how these are valued and promoted at the University of Missouri and the University of the Western Cape.
2. To collaborate on professional development course related to teaching multimodal literacies for university lecturers. Specifically, we plan to work together in April 2017 to October 2017 in planning and implementing this course.
3. To work together towards developing a plan for changing teaching, assessment, research and institutional processes and arrangements in order to implement and value multimodal literacies.
4. To contribute towards the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) regarding multimodal literacies and pedagogies.

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

I was fortunate that Dr Candace Kuby carefully prepared for my visit, and planned a detailed programme in consultation with me for the period that I spent at the University of Missouri. We also spent time planning in detail her reciprocal visit to Cape Town in July- August 2017. I attribute the success of our achieving our goals to the careful attention and time that Dr Candace Kuby devoted to the programme both prior to me coming and during the time that I was there. I was also given the opportunity to do two presentations while I was there – one on a panel on the scholarship of engagement and another on response-able higher education pedagogies. I also took part in a PhD class taught by Candace Kuby and had several meetings with her – both online with colleagues in South Africa and face-to-face planning the professional development course on multimodal pedagogies and post-qualitative research methods for the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education (30 July – 3 August 2017) and on the multimodal pedagogies colloquium planned at UWC on 7 and 8 August 2017, when Candace Kuby will be in Cape Town. Candace arranged appointments for me to meet the academics involved in the undergraduate programme on digital story telling and it would seem that there could be a good collaboration between UM and UWC on developing online professional or postgraduate digital storytelling courses for academics across the higher education institutions.

I was very fortunate to stay in the home of Margie Sable, a long-time UM collaborator with UWC who I had met many times in Cape Town and to see Lois Pierce, who is also a long-time collaborator with UWC and who I personally have collaborated with. These two UM academics opened their homes to me and went out of their way to make the visit as enjoyable and informative as possible. I also met with Marty Townsend, who had visited UWC in 1998 and had interesting information about the Academic Development Centre at UWC at that time.

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

I would have arranged to stay for the entire period with Margie Sable as she had offered this, instead of moving to the residence on campus. As it was I returned to stay the remainder of the time in her home conveniently situated close to campus after a short sojourn in the residence. I would like to particularly thank her partner, George Smith, from UM for his kindness and making my stay in Columbia so worthwhile.

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

UWC did its best to provide the necessary information to make the visit possible. I am not aware that any more could have been done to improve the visit. The response to emails etc. was always quick and efficient.

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

I think that the UM/UWC exchange program is a wonderful resource for both parties to learn from each other. There are projects between like-minded people that can enhance institutional teaching, research and community engagement.

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

There is nothing I would change at the moment about this programme – it provides opportunities for both students and academics to collaborate, study and research together – enhancing each others' capabilities.

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

The only problem I had was with the air ticket which had been canceled for some reason and I had difficulty getting access to the ticket at each airport on the way there and back.

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

The visit was specifically made to contribute towards Prof Vivienne Lawack's Apex project on multimodal literacies in higher education pedagogies. The project will therefore capacitate academics who take part in the professional development course on multimodal pedagogies in higher education and those who come to the two-day colloquium on multimodal literacies. It is envisaged that some scholarship is also developed from the project regarding multimodal pedagogies.

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

Yes I would definitely participate in an exchange again.

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

I was surprised about how large the Columbia campus of UM is and how large a city St Louis is. I was also surprised that UM was the only university which has developed an undergraduate degree in Digital Storytelling. I was surprised that the Cherokee alphabet appears on the iPhone and Apple products as well as Google and Microsoft Word. I met the person who developed and made sure that they were taken up by these online companies at UM Columbia. I found the interchange with him (Joseph Erb), a lecturer in animation on the Digital Storytelling curriculum, most inspiring.

xi. What did you like most about the program?

I liked staying with academics whose values were similar to mine, the detailed programme that Candace set up for me, working with Candace, giving presentations, meeting and going about St Louis with Lois Pierce and her partner and generally people's kindness while I was there.

xii. What other observations would you like to share?

Just to reiterate that there could be synergy between UM and UWC in developing an online qualification in Digital Storytelling. It would be great if the people involved in the undergraduate programme on this visited UWC to make such plans.

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

Candace Kuby will continue to meet with colleagues from UWC and other South African HEIs who are experts in Multimodal Literacies to plan the course in July-August 2017 and to plan the colloquium in August 2017. Beyond that we plan to engage in some scholarship of teaching and learning regarding multimodal pedagogies in higher education.

xiv. What specifically will these future endeavors entail?

This is listed above – a detailed programme has been worked out for Candace Kuby's visit to UWC in July-August 2017.

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

Yes the program should be continued as it allows for cross-pollination of ideas and like-minded people being able to think and work together to produce new teaching, scholarship and community engagement.

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