



Newsletter

Dear colleagues,

In this issue of the USF newsletter, we will discuss the pros and cons of virtual academic conferences and then launch two calls for collaboration.

The first concerns the setting up of a midwifery school in Haiti, and the other following a request from our Canadian sister association (AWB-USF) for the search for a rector for an Anglophone university in Uganda.

Wishing good reading.

Prof. Robert Laurini, Editor of the USF-AWB Newsletter. ■

About virtual or hybrid international

In recent months, having participated in several international conferences in partial or total virtual form as an organizer or key-note speaker, here are some thoughts on this subject. Attention, the term videoconferencing is ambiguous, here I am not talking about a simple meeting of 3 or 4 people for an hour or two, but of conferences, congresses or symposia bringing together several hundred people over several days.

For me, such a conference is both a place to test the validity of a scientific discovery or to present an enlightening experiment, but also and above all a forum in which we discuss with colleagues from different countries. With virtual or mixed form, advantages and disadvantages emerge.

Personally, I could see that every time I went to a «physical» conference, I came back with at least promising new contacts in terms of scientific collaboration. But most often it was with joint thesis agreements, applications for scientific residence, launch of European projects, beginnings of publications, etc. In

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short, for me, these organizational benefits were much more important than just presenting my own work. It is still not true that these benefits concern only laboratory directors or senior scientists, whereas for junior researchers, the presentation of the paper and its good acceptance by the scientific community take precedence.



Benefits of virtual conferences

Among the advantages, we will mention travel expenses (travel, hotel), the reduction of carbon emissions and despite everything a presentation of the text leading most often to a publication in a good level journal. Moreover, for the organizers, the additional costs of the type of room rental, coffee breaks are greatly reduced or absent. Moreover «social events» are reduced or even removed.

Disadvantages

I noted the lack of substantive debate once the article was submitted. Very often, participants who speak English poorly find it difficult to clarify their thinking in an audience

but prefer to speak directly with the author during coffee breaks. Moreover, the absence of «social events» makes it difficult or even impossible to make contacts. In short, the discussion forum aspect is reduced to its simplest expression. As for the organizational impact of the research, it is virtually nil.

Far be it from us to believe that we are opposed to videoconferencing, because in another field, that of training, these are all the more desirable if they are located in advance of an intervention on the place. In this case, they allow interveners to know more about who they are dealing with before making a costly trip for both parties. They also allow the receiving party to better frame its application and choose its audience. In short, while the face-to-face is always pedagogically better, teleconferencing makes sense when preparing a field mission.

If conferences are only considered a “shell” for oral presentations, virtual form is more cost-effective. But if the goal is to advance science, to launch partnerships, to design promising collaborations, we will have to invent something else.

In this context, what can be the avenues of reflection? What are the positions of learned societies on this subject? “Universitaires Sans Frontières” could contribute to this discussion. While the objectives of higher education are, according to Humboldt, to train future managers through the results of research, it is essential that structures be invented in order to bring forth these bubbles that are the preliminaries of great international collaborations.

For more information, contact Professor Robert Laurini, Robert.Laurini@usf-awb.org. ■

Call for collaborators; setting up a midwifery school in Haiti

The region of Jacmel in Haiti wants to open a school of midwives. To this end, USF has been commissioned to seek an interested expert to design the training to be given in this school. This person must have taught this discipline for at least 5 years.

Its role will be to help:

- define training programs in accordance with local needs, WHO recommendations, and the organization of the school,
- define the list of necessary equipment,
- discuss infrastructure design with architects

- help recruit teachers and other staff
- etc.



Send your resume by June 30, 2023, to Louis Philippe Benoit <benoitlouis@yahoo.fr>. ■

Announcement for a volunteer position as a rector - Ankole Western University (AWU), Uganda

AWU is looking for a highly trained, experienced, motivated, innovative and committed person to fill the post of a Rector. This is the top management position within the University’s Management Structure.



Ankole Western University (AWU) is a Private University in Uganda founded by West Ankole Diocese, and licensed by the National Council for Higher Education. The mission of the University is: “to produce God fearing, hardworking, disciplined and compassionate graduates of integrity, accountable to the community through learning and research”. It is located in the South Western region of Uganda, Sheema Municipality, 32 kms from Mbarara Municipality, along Mbarara – Fort Portal Road and about 290 kms from Kampala-Uganda’s capital city.

Job Purpose: To provide overall top leadership as an Executive Officer of the University responsible for resource mobilization, academic, financial and administrative management affairs in compliance with the laws of the Republic of Uganda, University regulations and plans.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

- Be responsible for short-, medium- and long-term plans of the University.
- Direct, promote and co-ordinate all the programmes and activities of the University;
- Be responsible for internal and external resource mobilization and management in consultation with the Chancellor and University Council for the implementation of University policies, plans and programmes;
- Build sound partnerships and collaborations for the University in areas of research, academics, extensions and infrastructure development;
- Be responsible for academic and administrative affairs and day-to-day running of the University;
- Be responsible for the general welfare, conduct and discipline of staff and students;
- Work collegially with the personnel of the University for the realization of the University's vision, mission, philosophy and core values;
- Be responsible for the efficient utilization of the financial, human and physical resources of the University;
- Ensure that necessary policies, plans and statutes of the University are developed, approved, implemented and regularly reviewed in accordance with changing circumstances;
- Be responsible to the Chancellor and University Council.
- Any other duties as prescribed in the Statute or assigned by the University Council from time to time.

Qualifications and Experience

- A PhD or its equivalent from a reputable institution.
- Should have taught in an Institution of Higher Learning for not less than 5 (five) years. A Professor would be much preferred.
- Should have Management experience of at least 3 years at Senior Management level.
- Have evidence of at least three publications and research experience.
- Should be a committed Christian and a

communicant in Church of Uganda/Anglican faith or a member of a Church in fellowship with Church of Uganda/Anglican faith.

- Should have extensive computer skills.
- Demonstrated high level of integrity and character.
- Experience of community engagement shall be an added advantage.
- Should possess good management, communication and negotiating skills.
- Willing to settle and work in Uganda on a full-time basis for at least 2 years+ giving holistic guidance and mobilising for the university growth. He/she can however stay with the University serving.

Terms

1. Nature of Contract: Volunteer
2. Duration: Two (2) – Five (5) years, renewable
3. Benefits:
 - a) Accommodation
 - b) Communication, local transport and meals allowances
 - c) Access to a private vehicle in case of travel plans
 - d) Basic medical care
4. Age: Between 45 and 70 years

How to Apply

Interested applicants should send their applications to Prof. Robert Laurini founder of USF-AWB. They should attach updated Curriculum Vitae, certified copies of Certificates, academic transcripts, previous appointment letters and any other relevant documents and provide names, telephone and e-mail contacts of three referees. Applications should reach the undersigned not later than June 30, 2023.

For more information about AWU contact: Dr. Medard Twinamatsiko, Vice Chairman University Council, Ankole Western University. Email-mtwinamatsiko@must.ac.ug; Tel: +256751892953; Website: www.awu.ac.ug. ■