

Hope University College

“Developing leadership for a world of hope”

Quarterly Report
April, May and June, 2009

From the President’s Office

We are happy to launch the quarterly report of Hope University College on its own for the first time. This reporting would continue of course updating our partners on the evolving saga of this very important knowledge enterprise. Thank you all for standing with us in this initiative with your thoughts, prayers and means and trust that your help will continue until the project is completed. The quarter marked progress in a number of areas while at the same time certain challenges like cost increases, delays in construction and unrealized hopes in the exemption from VAT became matters of prayer and appeals. Proposals were submitted to address the problem of cost increases. Furthermore, with commencement in view in September 2010, the President, Dr. Minas Hiruy, prepared a project proposal on operations for the first cycle of three years and submitted the same to our donors for consideration. A number of routines such as request for clearing duty free the equipping, furnishing, digital infrastructure, book stock that are to come, follow up on the construction and new contracts for furnishing and digital infrastructure were undertaken. Several of such jobs were divided among the various professionals hired. The office hosted many visitors from places like Stanford University, the UK and the Netherlands.

In tandem with anticipated autonomy of the university college, the President explored various possibilities on how this was to be done. The new law for charities in the county allowed separation and in the light of this provision, the Board was approached with a proposal. The Board was open to the proposal and wanted further exploration in the light of particularly what the Ministry of Education stipulates in this regard. The Advisory Board had an informal meeting together with the delegation of the Curriculum Consortium from Holland and the Senate on June 12 and was updated on all the developments much to its pleasure and appreciation.

Through the arrangement of Ethiopiaid/UK, it was made possible for Mr. Myles A. Wickstead, the former Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Ethiopia, to visit the university college during the last week of June with the President hosting him. The Ambassador brought with him an Internet based educational source that we could tap from the Open University called, the Open University in Africa. He visited the construction site and was quite impressed with what he saw. He offered to help in what he could and was approached by Dr. Minas to help the university college in a number of ways. The small but highly generous community of Katwijk has been an ardent supporter of the university college. One who has stood out from the community and supported the university college from the start has been Cor Schaap. Cor had prepared a video clip that we could use for public relations. The clip was posted on our website and please check it out. Similarly, the

Project Manager of the construction, Mr. Niek Hoffius, has been busy posting his updates on the progress of the construction of each building with pictures and statements on our website. We hope that this step would allow you to do some remote monitoring and evaluation of the work on the ground. We thank Niek for this contribution. Down the road, we envision to have the quarterly report being illustrated by pictures. We also plan to attach financial report in our subsequent report. In our use of the Internet in promoting the university college, the Manager of our website, Mr. John Van Deman of Menlo Park, California, has been providing a great service at his own expense and we are thankful.

The President was interviewed by the Ethiopian Reporter on the progress of the university college and the interview was posted in the Amharic Weekly. On April 29, he had an interview on national TV on the same topic. The President presented a paper at the Chamber of Commerce on April 7 on returnees of Ethiopians from the Diaspora. The audience constituted graduates of American universities, who were working in various sectors of prominence. His paper was subsequently printed in the Ethiopian Herald. On May 15, Dr. Minas had an assignment that he wanted to do for a long time. Being interested on how to help beggars help themselves, his proposal for a social fund of over 200 pages was accepted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. If endorsed, this fund will serve as the first social support mechanism in the country and in so being no one has to be indignified as a beggar.

Curricular Development

As the three faculties of science and technology, business management and entrepreneurship and ICT and the various departments within each faculty were identified, the challenges were framing the courses, syllabus of each course along with the required text books and the listing of faculty members in time to purchase the needed text books and recruit the faculty no later than May 2010. The President wanted the lists of faculty and text books before his planned trip to the US (by the end of July) in order to arrange interviews with interested applicants and search for text books while abroad. As this work began, a number of issues arose about the curriculum itself. The one issue was the type and number of departments in each faculty considering factors of manageability and of course demand. The other issue dealt with the length of time that it took to get the bachelor's degree that the university college planned to offer. As to the former, it was agreed for the faculties of science and technology and ICT to have two departments each and the faculty of business management and entrepreneurship to have three departments.

Dr. Fisseha Itanna, the Vice President for Academic Affairs made visits to the Ministry of Education, the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQUA) and various universities like Addis Ababa University, Adama University and Hawassa University to see if the draft that was evolving was fairly well contextualized. What was found out was that all federal universities transformed what we planned to offer under science and technology into a five year engineering program. But for us, on one hand, considering the cost and the massive investments in equipment, our university college could not readily launch an engineering school. On the other hand, based on our observation of the many companies that we had worked with in availing trained capacity at the TVET level, we had concluded that

what business has been needing rather desperately has been the kind of hands-on professional that could operate and lead the evolving industry in the country.

This realization led us to stick to the three year program already at work. A number of catalogues drawn from various institutions within country and abroad were examined to draw up the courses for the departments chosen within the faculties of science and technology and ICT. These courses were examined by various experts having faculty responsibilities within country and abroad. Considering our emphasis on competence, the competency-based training (CBT) introduced by our Dutch partners from Dronen Agricultural University and Christian University of Ede was to be part and parcel of the curricular package.

With these inputs, Dr. Fisseha was able to complete a zero draft for all the designated disciplines in the two faculties of science and technology and ICT in time for consideration during the consultation visit of our Dutch partners, Professor Corne Kocks and Mrs. Jolanda Berntsen of Dronen Agricultural University from June 6 to 12. As the delegation that was to come took on the responsibility of framing the details as regards the departments within the faculty of business management and entrepreneurship, such aspect was anxiously awaited. A third person, who joined the delegation, was Mr. Joop de Jong. Mr. Jong is a member of the Advisory Board and having an extensive teaching and business experience on IT, he gave his comment on the ICT disciplines and on the whole IT infrastructure of the university college discussing the framework with the relevant actors. The expenses of the delegation were covered by Woord & Daad.

Both the Professor and Mrs. Jolanda came with their draft of the departments of the third faculty and sample adaptations of the competency-based training. During the meeting of the Curriculum Consortium, the progress of the curricular development was discussed and a new plan of action with timetables was adopted. In this plan, it was decided to have a final stakeholder consultation in September on the zero draft as per the requirement of the Ministry of Education. A decision was also made to distribute the zero draft far in advance of the consultation so that the stakeholders would have time to read the draft and make their comments either before the consultation or after.

As the fine-tuning of the zero draft was to be done within the framing of the competency-based training, which included theoretical focus, skills, tasks within actual work situation and personal development, both the professor and Mrs. Berntsen explained this new development to the staff of the university college and later to the members of the Advisory Board. Dr. Fisseha was to consolidate the draft of the curriculum and to ensure that our major donors, Ethiopiaid/UK and its contributing partner agencies, Woord & Daad, Menlo Park Presbyterian Church and the various persons with whom we have been working got their copies in July and August for their timely inputs. Furthermore, the draft was to be posted on our website to solicit additional opinions from interested readers.

Dr. Doug Holland and Mrs. Betty Holland, who had committed themselves to volunteer at the university college starting from next January, gave their written feedback on the draft with a number of useful and professional feedback. They also contacted sources for possible

textbook contributions like publishers and colleges. They explored possibilities for sisterly relations with institutions like the University of New Hampshire. Furthermore, they discussed with us the number of courses that needed to be fielded as preparatory courses for all students and sent two packages of books that have been used in US universities in the areas of English and mathematics. Their written comments about the course offerings of the departments of the faculties of science and technology and ICT were very useful.

The Construction, Equipping and Furnishing Aspect

While during the start of the quarter it was noted that 71% of the construction of the first phase and 49% of the total construction were accomplished, the prices of cement, iron bar, fuel and labor cost continued to rise and power outages were frequent. At this time, it was known that the increase in the price of cement alone from the contract price rose by 275%. Anticipated exemption from VAT did not materialize. These developments, which hampered desired progress in the construction and posed a hefty financial gap, were brought to the attention of the Construction Consortium in the Netherlands during its meeting on April 1 in Nieuwerbrug, the Netherlands. Based on a recalculation of the costs assuming the above factors, the Consortium came up with a financial gap of Birr 24,737,162.00. It then discussed how to address this gap. The approach adopted was to appeal to existing and potential partners through a formal letter written by the President with the Consortium's recommendation. The President made the written appeals attaching the recommendation in May.. Other issues handled during this meeting were focused on furnishing and ICT.

The Consortium, having another meeting on May 19 in the same place, decided to visit the progress of the construction in Ethiopia from June 30 to July 2 and to have an audience with the Dutch Ambassador, Mr. A. Hennekens. An appointment was made for the morning of July 2 with a plan not only to discuss the university college but also to have the Ambassador visit the same. At the same time on the ground in Addis Ababa, with Mr. Hoffius being away for a longer period than usual due to circumstances, the Consortium wondered about who can replace Mr. Hoffius during his absence. As possibilities were explored, the staff of the university college was to monitor the progress in close consultation with the consultant.

Complaints were registered to the contractor about delays and wanting quality of workmanship in some items of finishing during the bimonthly meetings on the construction site involving the contractor, the consultant and the project manager. Furthermore, poor planning in material orders, gaps in oversight in plan execution and lack of staff supervision were noted and brought to the attention of both the project manager and the country representative of the contractor. Promises were made to rectify these problems. Minutes were held by the consultant during such meetings and distributed for approval and mutual accountability. A job that finally got off the ground was the redesign of the foundation work of the technical center on account of a swampy location.

Furnishing

The university college had been looking for various options to select reasonable, durable and appealing furniture for both students and staff. From the Chinese trip involving the

President, the project manager and the head of the consultancy, Mr. Yosef Bereded, no vendor came up with an acceptable furniture. Local furniture providers were examined by the same people and they did not offer quality furniture at affordable prices either. Owing to this challenge, A Dutch furniture maker, BOM Interieurs, was proposed by our Dutch partners. The company, following our approach, visited the buildings, examined the design with the consultant and was asked to propose custom made furnishings to the design and quantity requirements conveyed together by the consultant, the project manager and the President. At a later date, the company came up with a catalog of various furniture and the cited team made the choices for the company to draw up a detailed proposal.

The company presented its proposal to the relevant parties and the Construction Consortium during its meeting of April 1. The Consortium discussed the proposal of the company in the presence of the company's CEO, Mr. Huib Bom. The consortium discussed all matters regarding production, shipping and warranty against loss or damage en route and of course after installation. The company was willing to handle the shipping as well as the warranty. It was then decided for the company to submit its financial proposal for consideration. The Consortium liked the high standard and durability of the furniture. Woord & Daad is to be requested to fund the purchase when and if the company gets the award.

ICT

China Jiangsu appointed Global Computing Solutions to put in place the cable work for the digital lines. Global Solutions was found to be the only credible expert in this regard in Addis Ababa considering its experience in doing similar work in institutions of higher learning, the private and public sectors in Ethiopia. However, as regards the installation of data systems, the same company and other companies within Ethiopia were asked to present their proposals. With Global Computing Solutions coming up with the most viable offer, its proposal was distributed to our partners, Ethiopiaid, Woord & Daad and Menlo Park Presbyterian Church and posted on our website for comment. Various conclusions indicated that the offer was on the high side, the equipment package slightly dated and overdone.

This finding led us to down size slightly the equipment list as per the recommendations and incorporate more efficient but less costly hardware and ask various international vendors including Global Computing Solutions for offers. Two international companies, Wentzo of Holland and Cisilion of the UK along with Global Computer Solutions made their offers. The offers were analyzed by Mr. Hoffius and later examined by the Consortium during its meeting on April 1. The Consortium found Global Computing Solutions with the least offer and unlike the other companies, its physically presence in Addis Ababa was a plus. The Consortium then was comfortable with the choice of Global Computing Solutions if the university college so approves.

Fundraising

The President submitted his requests for additional funding to the various donors of the university college to address the funding gap. All who received the requests were interested in knowing who gave what. The local appeals placed on various newspapers brought no encouraging response. However, by the end of the quarter, signs of good news began to

surface. Woord & Daad approached EO Metterdaad, a Dutch television company, to see if it could help in raising funding for the university college. The company was willing to do so and contacts were made with the President for on sight television filming. Mr. Henk de Pagter, the Chairman of the Construction Consortium, made his giving public during his visit of the site on June 30 pledging to finance all the additional costs of the library. Mr. Alec Reed, Chairman of the Trustees of Ethiopiaid/UK was approached by the charity's manager and a reply was being awaited.

Postponement of Classes

Considering that the contractor was not able to get ready the first phase buildings for class commencement in September 2009, the management of the university college shared its proposal with our stakeholders to postpone the time of commencement to September 2010 and the Board. As no objection came from all consulted in the light of the hurdles noted, the postponement was finally approved by the Board.

Administrative and Financial Affairs

A number of administrative and financial guidelines had to be worked out. Dr. Behailu Abebe, the Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs did his research on how private and public universities had managed their affairs and used soft wares. He put together guidelines in line with our charter and submitted a draft of student and staff handbooks for consideration. He also prepared various forms that are typical in a university community. He followed up on our application for VAT exemption. At the same time, in order to be considered for duty free importation of material for furnishing, equipment and books, a proposal was required based on our previous project agreement. The President began to prepare this document as specific lists of equipment, machinery and furniture came from vendors and contractors for consideration by the concerned government bodies. Our appeal for volunteers was posted on our website. Responding to this query, a number of interested individuals from the US and Europe emailed to us. One person, Dr. Jonathan Partee from the US, actually made an appointment to talk to the President and did so on April 6. Dr. Partee, whose great grandfather, Dr. Don McClure, gave long and illustrious service to Ethiopia, is interested to help in whatever he could.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Office of the President
Hope University College
155 Churchill Road
P.O. Box 12382
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251-11-1560346/1560347
Fax: +251-11-1552638
Email: hopeuc_dl@yahoo.com
Website: www.hopeuniversitycollege.org.**