



African Educational Research Network (AERN)

and the [*AFRICAN SYMPOSIUM*](#)
An Online African Educational Research Journal

Wednesday, 5 May 2010 African Education Research Network Mini Summit General Meeting (Day 2)

Attending: Professor David Adewuyi, Professor Frederick Gravenir, Professor Frederick Gravenir, Dr. P. Claver Kariyo, Dr. Eugenia Kafanabo, Mr. Callist Kayigamba, Dr. Bernard Kivunge, Dr. Donald Kombo, Professor C. M. Magagula, Mr. Isaac Mwangi, Professor Charles L. M. Olweny, Professor Barnabas Otaala, and Professor Linda J. Rice

Meeting Chair, Professor Olweny opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

Items highlighted indicate decisions.

- I. The Present and Future of AERN (Professor Adewuyi)
 - A. Professor Adewuyi gave an introduction about how we might move AERN forward. The following were proposed as suggestions and points of discussion.
 1. One of the main goals is to promote partnerships, particularly for African universities to partner with American universities for the purpose of research, grant writing, faculty exchanges, and study abroad programs. This would enable African nations to draw upon technology available in American universities. Memorandums of Understanding will be helpful to outline specific terms of agreement for partnerships and subsequent responsibilities.
 2. The suggestion was made to require a subscription to *The African Symposium*. *The African Symposium* has become respected as a peer reviewed journal, making it viable for subscriptions. The proposal is for American and African universities to have to pay for a subscription for the journal. Currently the journal is accessible to all free of charge.
 3. The fee for the journal could be \$1,000.00 annually or \$5,000.00 for a lifetime membership.
 4. AERN needs to establish a clear set of procedures for the Editorial Board. In addition to reviewing articles, members of the Editorial Board need to spread the word about the journal.

5. The home for the AERN website should be the host institution since the journal is the most active component of the organization. A concern, however, is how to handle the website when the Managing Editor of the journal changes institutions.
6. Institutions, both in Africa and the U.S., need to see the benefit of AERN membership. These could be taken directly from the website's statements on: Mission, Vision, and Goals.
7. We need to explore what it would take for the journal to be recognized internationally. The fact that the journal is free can take away from its prominence as faculty tend to look to be published in journals that require a fee and membership to access.
8. In creating Memorandums of Understanding or generally expanding the visibility of AERN, we also need to consider that American universities are particularly interested in knowing that the organization can reach many African universities.
9. The suggestion was made and it was later decided to have a particular tab on the website detailing Benefits of Membership. The new Benefits section will be derived from the Mission, Vision, and Goals statements on the website. This will be done by the Technical Editor.
10. Making AERN a 501(c) compliant organization would make the organization one that would have an official, non-profit status. This would have to comply with U. S. laws but allow donors to give tax-deductible contributions to the organization.

II. Discussion of Membership (Professor Olweny facilitating).

- A. The following suggestions ensued about levels of membership.
 1. Founding Members
 2. Institutional Membership (Annual)
 3. Institutional Membership (Lifetime)
 4. Individual Membership
 5. Library Membership (to access journal)
- B. We would need to consult Professor Ploghoft to find out who the Founding Members were.
- C. Privileges of Founding Members—listed as such on website. These institutions would still have to pay Institutional Membership.
- D. Membership will be required to publish in *The African Symposium*.
- E. Annual Membership Fees
 1. Institutional Membership = \$1000.00
 2. Individual Membership = \$100.00

3. Library Membership (to access journal for non-institutional members) = \$500.00

F. If an institution pays its membership, its library and individuals automatically has a subscription to *The African Symposium*.

III. The Structure of AERN (Professor Olweny facilitating)

- A. The following are based on the premise that Virginia Union University President, Professor Claude G. Perkins, commit VUU as the Secretariat for AERN.
- B. The By-Laws of AERN will guide the organization in terms of advancing a structure by which the organization runs. We must bear in mind that where the annual summit will be held will likely influence who the Chair and Co-Chair are in a given year.
- C. Co-chairs, one from an African and one from an American (or other host nation, anticipating future international members) university, may be helpful.
- D. The Technical Editor hosts the website; this is currently Dr. Brookins at North Carolina State University.
- E. The Secretariat is responsible for overall coordination of AERN activities.
- F. The proposal was made and decision made to create a position of Director of Membership and Treasurer. The Director of Membership would be responsible for pro-actively reaching out to institutions and inviting their institutional and library memberships. This could be a bit too complicated to take on at this point in AERN's ongoing development. This position could also exist within the Secretariat via someone to assist with membership.
- G. The AERN Mini Summit endorsed Virginia Union University's proposal that under the leadership of VUU President, Professor Claude G. Perkins, VUU become the Secretariat and provide the resources necessary for the Secretariat to put forth significant effort to continue to advance AERN.
- H. The Secretariat's duties will include membership, office work, planning for annual meetings, providing the database, circulating issues of concern to AERN, providing promotional leadership in terms of communication, subscriptions, and doing the marketing for the organization.
- I. The signatories for expenditures from the AERN account will be AERN's Co-Chairs.
- J. Professor Adewuyi proposed writing a grant to cover the expenses associated with support needed for the Secretariat's work. This proposal was endorsed at the AERN Mini Summit. The grant proposal could encompass those items detailed on page 3 of the Minutes of the Mini Summit held at Virginia Union University, November 4-6, 2009. These items include the following:
 - 1. Web Design = \$5000.00

2. Research Assistant (web management) = \$18,000.00
3. Equipment and Software = \$1,000.00
4. Research Assistant (editorial) = \$18,000.00
5. Total = \$42,000

- K. The suggestion was made to provide periodic updates on which libraries and institutions have become members of AERN. This will be reflected on the website.
- L. The suggestion was made to coordinate our efforts, at least via communicating, with the Association of African Universities.
- M. The suggestion was made, once the details discussed prior have been finalized, to take AERN information (at least via the website) to conferences we attend throughout the world. That way we may promote and advocate AERN by showing Benefits of Membership.

IV. Review and Suggestions for Revision of By-Laws and Meetings (Professor Olweny facilitating)

- A. Participants reviewed a hard copy of the By-Laws as well as pages 3-4 of the minutes from the AERN Summit in Gaborone, April 9-12, 2008.

1. For AERN's purposes, we will use the "North/South" designation with South referring to any countries below the Mediterranean.
2. The Executive Committee, include the following:
 - a. President or Chair (from an African nation)
 - b. Co-Chair (from a non-African nation)
 - c. Director of Membership and Treasurer
 - d. Editor of *The African Symposium*
 - e. Technical Editor (website management)

- B. Discussion of Frequency of Meetings ensued.

1. The AERN Summits will be held bi-annually.
2. Special meetings may be held as necessary.

- C. AERN encourages co-hosting by institutions as much as possible.

- D. Each institution is to have two representatives to serve as reviewers for *The African Symposium*.

- E. Members will provide input on the final version of the minutes of this meeting. Professor Magagula will integrate decisions made that are reflected in the minutes and affect the By-Laws and make sure the By-Laws reflect these changes. The revised By-Laws will be shared with the members for feedback. Then Professor Magagula will move the By-Laws through a legal consultant for recommendations and approval.

- F. Professor Adewuyi will consult with Professor Perkins and partners from the North to determine the site of the 2012 AERN Summit.
- V. On-line Learning and AERN (facilitated by Professor Olweny)
- A. We reviewed the documents from Ohio University and Educsoft and discussed the feasibility and benefits of web-based instruction or E-Learning.
 - 1. Professor Sandra Turner from Ohio University had a very successful program using a blended format (i.e., combination of face-to-face and distance learning) to train Ghanaian Educators with a Masters of Education in Computer Education and Technology. This might be used as a model for AERN as it develops approaches to online teaching and learning, the future of education across the globe.
 - 2. Secondary schools are facing a significant problem in sufficiently preparing students for college, particularly in the areas of reading competency or English skills, math, and science. Online instruction could be utilized to improve students' readiness for college. It is our hope that Professor Sharma will come and share more about the potential of Educsoft and online learning at a future meeting of AERN.
 - B. AERN recognizes that On-line Learning is integral to the future of education. We should embrace it and pursue funds to further explore E-Learning, including possible pilot projects geared to better prepare secondary students for college.
 - C. AERN would like Professor Man Sharma from Clark Atlanta University, Georgia to take a pilot run, perhaps with Uganda Martyrs University, to test the program described in Educsoft to prepare students for college work.
 - D. AERN may sponsor delegates to attend the ICT Symposium conference in Kampala on June 28-29, 2010. Co-sponsors of the conference are Verizon, the Uganda Communications Commission, and Uganda Martyrs University. The conference is by invitation only.
 - E. Professor Gravenir shared about another project taking place in Sub-Saharan Africa involving Instructional Technology and Teacher Education. He suggested pulling together several institutions to explore the possibility of collaborating on program development.
 - F. Professor Eugenia Kafanabo shared that the University of Open University of Tanzania has some distance learning for undergraduates, but these programs utilize print materials and correspondence rather than online format at this time.

- G. The Kigali Institute of Education is hosting E-Learning classes, a project managed by the government of India in conjunction with the African Union.
- H. Professor Olweny shared that we should take advantage of Summer Sessions to help students make the transition from secondary school to college. Uganda Martyrs University has had such summer course work in Public Speaking, Etiquette, Reading Skills, and Theater Appreciation. The idea is to provide a transition to life with enriching courses that students would not take via the traditional college coursework.
- I. Mr. Callist Kayigamba shared that the government of Rwanda has an initiative underway that would provide a laptop for every child by 2020.
- J. Professor Pierre Claver Kariyo shared that the University of Burundi has hosted for the past seven years an electronic platform called Francophone Numeric Campus which offers, through the Francophone University Agency, the opportunity of completing a bachelor's or master's degree by e-learning. This opportunity has allowed the university to train more people at a lower cost.

Respectfully submitted by Professor Linda J. Rice, Ohio University