The Commonwealth of Learning was established in September 1988. The Commonwealth Heads of Government, meeting in Vancouver the previous year, decided to take the initiative. The document establishing the organization is a Memorandum of Understanding agreed upon by the then forty-eight independent nations which made up the Commonwealth. The new international organization is governed by a board whose members are drawn from different parts of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The Commonwealth of Learning has three overall goals:

- To promote the sharing of distance teaching materials, and to support the development of new course materials which meet particular needs in the various countries of the Commonwealth.
- To strengthen institutional capacities by providing staff training, fostering communications, establishing an information services network on distance education and supporting collaboration in evaluation and research.
- To assist distance education institutions to provide better services to students, improving study support systems, and facilitating the transfer of credit between Commonwealth institutions.

The Commonwealth of Learning is committed to achieving these goals in distance education through consultation, cooperation and collaboration.

It is expected to work with a wide variety of agencies and institutions including colleges and universities. It will not concentrate all of its attention on the development of highly sophisticated technology. The Commonwealth of Learning is as much involved in simple forms of technology, including print, as it is in more advanced communication technology involving satellites and computers.

In its first year, The Commonwealth of Learning was concerned with a limited number of objectives. These include work on the cooperative use of teaching materials in various subject areas, the establishment of a Commonwealth - wide information services network and staff training in cooperation with a number of distance teaching institutions.

The headquarters of The Commonwealth of Learning is situated in Vancouver. Various regional activities have been accorded priority by the board, and the development of programmes depends on a decentralized approach. The beginnings of the new Commonwealth initiative in the development of educational services are modest, but the long-term aim is bold:

"...to look forward to the day when any learner, anywhere in the Commonwealth, shall be able to study any distance teaching program available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth."
First President of the Commonwealth of Learning

Dr. James Ajodhya Maraj was appointed President of the Commonwealth of Learning in November 1988. He was formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, as well as an Assistant Secretary-General in the Commonwealth Secretariat.

In announcing the appointment, Lord Briggs, chairman of the Board of Governors, said that the Search Committee wished to identify as President and Chief Executive Officer an educational leader of international stature. Lord Briggs went on, “The incumbent must combine international experience with an understanding of the application of distance education in development, excellent interpersonal skills and demonstrated ability in government relations, management and fund raising.”

“Dr. Maraj’s impressive academic background,” said Lord Briggs, “together with his extensive experience and highly commended performance in a variety of roles made him an ideal choice.”

In addition to his service to the Commonwealth as Assistant Secretary General, Dr. Maraj has served as Fiji’s High Commissioner to Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and India. He was also Permanent Secretary in the office of the Prime Minister of Fiji.

His experience also includes service with the World Bank in Washington. He took part in the evaluation of Bank-supported education projects around the world.

Lord Briggs added that the Board of Governors was confident that Dr. Maraj had the energy, initiative and innovative ability to give the new organization an excellent beginning.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Shridath Ramphal welcomed Dr. Maraj’s appointment and paid tribute to his earlier contributions to the Commonwealth. The Secretary-General expressed confidence that the Commonwealth of Learning would be given a dynamic start.

STAFF PROFILES

Professor G. Ram Reddy joins The Commonwealth of Learning as its first Vice President. He is an educationist with a rich background in distance education and has served as Vice Chancellor of the Universities of Osmania, Andhra Pradesh and Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Professor Reddy has served as a consultant to major international bodies and held several responsible positions in the field of higher education. He was a member of both working groups whose reports led to the establishment of The Commonwealth of Learning.

Dr. Dennis Irvine assumed duties as Director of Caribbean Programmes and Materials Acquisition and Development in July 1989.

A former Vice Chancellor of the University of Guyana and UNESCO’s first Adviser in Science and Technology to the Caribbean, Dr. Irvine is well known and highly regarded in both education and scientific circles internationally.

Peter McMechan joins The Commonwealth of Learning as Director of Pacific Programmes and Continuing Professional Education. He moved from conventional teaching into the development and administration of distance education in 1973, becoming Director of Extension Services at the University of the South Pacific in 1976. Mr. McMechan held a similar post at the University of Otago, New Zealand where he developed a nation-wide teaching facility based on a teleconferencing network.

John Quigley joins The Commonwealth of Learning as Director, Communications and Technology on secondment from Canada’s Department of Communications where he was, most recently, Director-General responsible for the Pacific Region.

Mr. Quigley will be responsible for the development of systems to strengthen The Commonwealth of
Learning's networking role and for the technological and telecommunications underpinning of all COL's programmes.

Well known and respected in the scientific and telecommunications community, Mr. Quigley brings to The Commonwealth of Learning, a high degree of specialised experience.

Hafiz Wali joins the Commonwealth of Learning as Director of African Programmes and Information Services. Before coming to Vancouver in December 1989, he was director of the National Teachers' Institute in Kaduna, Nigeria, for thirteen years. Prior to that he was Chief Inspector of Education for the government of Kano State. Under his leadership, the National Teachers' Institute has trained many Nigerian teachers using distance education techniques.

Sooknath Lackhan, Head of Administration and Finance, comes to The Commonwealth of Learning from a position as Deputy Bursar at the University of the West Indies where he served for over twenty years.

A chartered accountant and an economics graduate, Mr. Lackhan is also a trained teacher. He brings considerable strengths to the Administration and Finance Division where he will have major responsibility in the finance area.

Sherrill Whittington, Special Assistant, joins The Commonwealth of Learning from the Commonwealth Secretariat where she was a Research Officer in the International Affairs Division. Prior to that, she worked as a Legislative Research Specialist in South Asian Affairs in the Parliamentary Library, Canberra.

Eeducated in Australia, Ms. Whittington taught English and Modern History at senior secondary level for twelve years. She will be attached to the President's Office.

John Steward, Senior Programme Officer, has served as Inspector of Chemistry in Kenya, and a Science Adviser in Papua New Guinea and several Caribbean countries. Educated in Uganda and Britain, he has most recently been Materials Development Officer with the Caribbean Examinations Council under a CFTC appointment.

Continued on Page 6

**Letter From The President**

An organisation planned by eminent professionals, endorsed by Ministers of Education, created by Heads of Government and warmly welcomed by Her Majesty, as Head of the Commonwealth, must carry high expectations. The speed with which it has been established – a period of less than two years from conception to becoming operational – indicates the urgency that is felt for its services. Funded on a voluntary basis, it is noteworthy, too, that developing countries have contributed significantly to its initial resources.

The message is clear. Throughout the Commonwealth but especially in the developing countries, the demands for increased access to quality education must be responded to sooner rather than later and conventional approaches alone will not suffice.

This new institution – the latest addition to the Commonwealth family of organizations, – inspired by the Commonwealth tradition of consultation and cooperation will seek through collaboration with other institutions and agencies to expand the educational opportunities so desperately needed as leaders and their people reach out for a more fulfilling and productive life.

We, who are charged with laying the foundations, know full well that it is only through the goodwill, support and active participation of countless others that any real success will be achieved in meeting the challenges that lie ahead.

We would welcome your advice, ideas and suggestions and invite you to be a part of this exciting venture.

James A. Maraj
President
The Caribbean

After fifteen months of operation of The Commonwealth of Learning, several projects are developing in the Caribbean.

In Jamaica, the government's main priority is to improve the quality of primary education. About seven thousand primary school teachers will need to be trained or upgraded, largely using distance education techniques. Education Minister Burchell Whiteman told COL staff that the priority areas for assistance were operation of the system, delivery of materials and accreditation.

The Commonwealth of Learning is to assist with the establishment of a national distance education infrastructure. It will also assist with the training of educational supervisors and course writers. The Commonwealth of Learning will also promote institutional links specifically for the teacher training project. In Canada, TV Ontario and the North York School Board have been identified as useful contributors to the project.

...The Commonwealth of Learning is helping Caribbean Universities deliver courses using distance education techniques.

The common priority identified throughout the Caribbean region is agricultural development. Recognizing this, The Commonwealth of Learning is helping the University of the West Indies Faculty of Agriculture to enlarge its extension service through distance education.

In Guyana, The Commonwealth of Learning team was told that there is an urgent need for skilled personnel in almost every field imaginable. COL arranged for a consultant, Professor John Turner of Manchester University, to formulate an assistance package.

Elsewhere, in Guyana, plans are under way to link the University of Guyana with the Distance Teaching Experiment of the University of the West Indies (UWIDITE). In this way, the University of Guyana can contribute materials to the rest of the Caribbean as well as receive material from the University of the West Indies. The University of Guyana will also benefit from new electronic links between the campus and study centres located outside of the capital.

Distance Education in Tonga

Agreement has been reached with AIDAB, Australia’s development assistance bureau to fund a workshop at the Community Development and Training Centre in Tonga, as part of a joint programme initiated by COL and AIDAB to assist distance education projects in the South Pacific. An Australian institution, chosen through AIDAB's tendering procedures, will provide technical assistance for the Workshop, and the project will be managed by ACPAC (the Australian Centre for Pacific Development and Training). Distance education course materials from a variety of Australian institutions will be available to the Tongan workshop members, who will examine ways in which existing materials may be modified for local use. A further objective of the Workshop will be to chart the steps which CDTC Tonga must take to develop a distance teaching dimension as a part of the growth of the new higher-learning institutions for this island nation.

The Solomon Islands Distance Education Network

Preliminary planning has now been completed for the design of the provincial teaching network in Solomon Islands. The basis will be a teleconference facility made possible by the domestic satellite delivery network instituted this year by Telekom Solomon Islands, the nation's international and domestic common carrier. Teaching programmes for the network will originate from the Solomon Islands college for Higher Education (SICHE), and from the USP Centre, Honiara. Assistance for the development of suitable distance education programmes will be made possible through a joint COL/AIDAB (Australian) project aimed at assisting SICHE to expand opportunities for the continuing education of teachers in a country that covers an island chain over a distance of a thousand miles. COL will assist SICHE and the USP Centre with programme initiatives in other areas.

Distance Education in Brunei

The Minister of Education in Brunei Darussalam has established a committee to advise Government on the ways in which Brunei can make use of distance education as a part of the country's development. Commonwealth of Learning staff have recently spent some time with Ministry of Education officials, and with key staff in the University of Brunei Darussalam. Papers are being prepared for study by the committee, which is expected to report to the Minister in July. Shortly after the Report is received it is hoped to be able to put in place pilot projects which have been identified by the committee as appropriate. Within the framework established as a result of the committee's deliberations, a Distance Education Centre may be established in Bandar Seri Begawan as the basis of a long-term relationship between Brunei and COL.

COMLEARN A COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING PUBLICATION
Commonwealth

West Africa

As part of its program of consulting the nations of the Commonwealth, senior staff from The Commonwealth of Learning will hold consultations with the West African nations from July 24 to 27, 1990. The venue will be Banjul, Gambia. The meeting will be of great benefit to The Commonwealth of Learning and the governments of Commonwealth West Africa. The staff of COL will use the forum of the meeting to explain its objectives and structure, and at the same time examine the extent of the challenges facing each nation of the sub-region.

This mutual exchange will, it is hoped, enable both parties to agree on the nature and scope of COL activities in each country. The meeting will address ways of facilitating cooperation between the nations of the sub-region.

At the same time The Commonwealth of Learning will be able to examine the extent of the educational challenges facing each nation. A process of assessment can then begin of how distance education techniques can help in meeting those challenges.

Based on its experience in other parts of the Commonwealth it is likely that COL will be able to assist West African Commonwealth nations in the field of human and material resources exchange. Another important area of COL’s work is in data collection and analysis of educational needs. Finally COL can assist in the areas of science, technology, mathematics and teacher education.

Nigeria

Following the consultation in Banjul, the president and senior staff from the Commonwealth of Learning will visit Nigeria for further consultations with the government and distance education professionals.

As with many Commonwealth countries, the government of Nigeria faces the dilemma of greatly increased demand for education at the same time that resources are dwindling. Distance education techniques have already been identified as one of the means of resolving that dilemma.

...The Commonwealth of Learning will be able to examine the extent of the educational challenges facing each nation.

Historically, distance education has played an important role in Nigeria. There are currently more than a dozen distance education programs there. The largest in terms of enrolments and infrastructure is the teacher training course at the National Teachers’ Institute in Kaduna. The University of Abuja uses both conventional and distance education techniques.

In addition to these two organizations, the University of Lagos and Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria both use distance education components in some of their courses.

The government of Nigeria has set up a planning committee to advise the minister of education on all aspects of Nigeria’s participation in the activities of The Commonwealth of Learning. The committee has identified several priority areas where COL may be able to assist. These include secondary level science and math courses for teachers and science and technology awareness courses. In-service teacher training is also a priority.

Commonwealth of Learning staff will also hold discussions with the Nigerian Ministry of Communications. An important part of the mandate for COL is the development of communications technology for use in education.

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

The Vice-President of the Commonwealth of Learning, Professor Ram Reddy, visited Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in February 1990. There has been a tradition of Distance Education in Bangladesh since 1978. In 1985, the Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education was set up with the aim of providing in-service training for teachers. The Director of BIDE suggested that assistance from the Commonwealth of Learning should take the form of training workshops in distance education techniques and revision and update of course materials.

The Government of Bangladesh has committed itself to expanding the use of Distance Education in a number of areas.

The Government of Bangladesh and the Asia Development Bank are cooperating in a project to establish an Open University in Bangladesh. COL will be able to assist them in the areas of personnel training and materials acquisition.

In Sri Lanka the political turmoil has created a crisis in education. There is currently a deeply felt need to develop and expand the Open University of Sri Lanka which became operational in 1980. The OUSL is offering programmes in Natural Sciences, Engineering and Humanities. There are plans to expand the number of programmes. A teacher training facility will meet the great demand for teachers. Senior staff at the OUSL identified several areas where COL can assist. These are, training in audio-visual production and the development and acquisition of course materials, particularly in the field of Nursing and Agricultural Engineering. COL has also been asked to help improve the quality of production of print materials.
As a result of these consultations, the government of Sri Lanka has pledged an annual financial contribution to COL in the amount of 10,000 pounds sterling.

**Southern Africa**

In September 1989, Dr. Dennis Irvine, a director of the Commonwealth of Learning, visited Southern Africa. His first stop was in Zimbabwe where he consulted with the government on how COL may be able to assist with human resources development.

The most urgent need in Zimbabwe is to readdress the shortage of qualified teachers in technological subjects. Secondly the government is hoping to use distance education techniques to upgrade the training of some primary and secondary teachers. The government has suggested to COL that the organization may be able to assist existing institutions such as the Zimbabwe Institute of Distance Education. The assistance would be in the form of training in distance education techniques, materials and equipment.

The government of Lesotho informed the Commonwealth of Learning that its principal concern is to meet the large demand for teachers. There is also a policy to give all primary school leavers at least one practical skill.

In Botswana the most urgent need again is for teachers. Many teachers at primary level would like to upgrade their skills and the government is supporting them in this role. The government also indicated that there is a need to train teachers in the skills of distance education itself, such as course writers and radio script writers.

In both Botswana and Swaziland academics suggested that there is a need to train people in skills like accountancy and bookkeeping.

Following upon Dr. Irvine’s visit COL and AIDAB will cooperate to strengthen the Distance Learning Assoc. of Southern Africa.

**Staff Profiles**

He will work closely with Dr. Irvine in the acquisition and development of materials especially in science.

**Susan Phillips**, Programme Officer, was until recently an instructional designer and manager of The Team, Computer Options in Learning and Training at North Island College in British Columbia.

She brings to The Commonwealth of Learning team considerable expertise in the design, development and teaching of courseware utilizing computer assisted instruction.

**Professor Peter Kinyanjui**, Senior Programme Officer. Well known in distance education in Africa and internationally, Professor Kinyanjui brings to the COL team a wide variety of experience. His responsibilities will focus on African programmes and teacher education. He will work closely with Hafiz Wali, Director African Programmes.

**Janet Jenkins** joins The Commonwealth of Learning as a Senior Programme Officer. Most recently she has been Director of the International Extension College with responsibility for Training. A former Vice-President of the International Council for Distance Education, Ms. Jenkins is well-known for her distance education activities throughout the world.

She will work closely with Professor Ram Reddy in the area of training.

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**Inauguration of COL**

At the inaugural ceremony, Premier William van der Zalm handed over the lease for the Robson Square facility which was to be the headquarters of the new organization, to the Chairman of the Board, Lord Briggs. The Commonwealth of Learning was formally inaugurated.

A highlight of the ceremony was the following message received from Her Majesty the Queen, as Head of the Commonwealth.

"I am delighted to hear that the formal inauguration of The Commonwealth of Learning, which was decided upon at the last meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government in Vancouver is to take place in that same city only twelve months later. The institution of these arrangements for Commonwealth cooperation in distance education is a most important practical step in cementing relationships between the members. I look forward confidently to the healthy growth and development of this new institution under the Chairmanship of Lord Briggs; and offer a most hearty welcome to this new and significant element in the fabric of the Commonwealth."

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**Honours to COL**

Andhra Pradesh Open University has conferred an honorary doctorate (D.Litt) on The President, Dr. James Maraj.

also Dr. Maraj: Adjunct Professor at University of Victoria, B.C.

Prof. Peter Kinyanjui: Adjunct Professor at Simon Fraser University.

Hafiz Wali: Fellow of the Computer Association of Nigeria.
"Bringing Women into the Mainstream", was the title of a four day conference held in Delhi from May 14 to 17. Women university vice-chancellors from throughout the Commonwealth took part. They discussed ways in which distance education can be the catalyst for increasing the access of Commonwealth women to education and training.

The conference was organized and funded by the Commonwealth of Learning in cooperation with the Indira Gandhi National Open University. It was held in response to requests from Commonwealth governments to examine ways in which the role of women in Commonwealth nations can be increased.

The conference was chaired by Dr. James A. Maraj, President of The Commonwealth of Learning. The Vice-President of COL, Professor G. Ram Reddy, a former vice-chancellor of IGNOU, and Miss Jocelyn Barrow a member of the board of COL, assisted Dr. Maraj. Administrative support and liaison with IGNOU was provided by Susan Phillips, Programme Officer at COL.

Before his departure for Delhi, Professor Reddy said, "There is already a strong tradition in India of encouraging women to take distance education courses at all levels. This tradition also exists in other parts of the Commonwealth."

Professor Reddy went on to say that the experience of Commonwealth distance educators should be shared with all Commonwealth nations.

The keynote addresses at the conference were given by the Chairman of the University Grants Commission of India, Professor Yashpal and by Senator Mair, Minister of State in Jamaica's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Learning is already planning practical assistance to women in the Commonwealth. Members of the nursing profession in Barbados have approached the organization to arrange a link between Barbadian nurses who wish to upgrade their professional skills and the University of Victoria, British Columbia, (Canada) which uses distance education techniques to teach nursing.

Following the conference, Dr. Maraj and Professor Reddy held official consultations with the Indian Ministry of Education and with the vice-chancellors of several open universities. They also met with the directors of training institutions to discuss the possibility of using distance education in civil service training programs.

At the Andhra Pradesh Open University in Hyderabad, an honorary doctorate was conferred on Dr. Maraj. Andhra Pradesh was the first open university in India using distance education techniques to widen access to education.
Distance Education in Kenya

The first post-independence Kenya Education Commission recommended, inter alia, the establishment of a government-sponsored programme that would combine lessons by radio with correspondence courses. Hence the Correspondence Course Unit was set up in 1967 at the University of Nairobi, and the first courses were aimed at in-service training of primary school teachers, 30 per cent of whom did not have any professional qualifications.

The principal mode of delivery is through printed correspondence lessons, supplemented by regular radio broadcasts over Voice of Kenya, and occasional face-to-face instruction. Candidates follow a three-year programme in both academic and professional subjects and those who pass the appropriate national examinations are awarded certificates comparable to those given at the full-time residential colleges. To date over 12,000 teachers have undergone in-service training through distance education methods.

Another programme conducted on similar lines is aimed at 3,000 adult literacy teachers who are employed on full-time basis by the government. They are required to take approved in-service courses in adult and literacy education for two years before they are accorded professional recognition as adult education teachers within the public service career structure. There are plans to extend this course to some 5,000 additional teachers who are engaged on a part-time basis to teach literacy classes organised under the auspices of religious and non-government organisations in the country.

**Training workshops on distance education techniques have been conducted by all staff on a regular basis.**

In 1985 the U. of Nairobi, at the request of government, established an external degree programme to conduct distance education courses leading to the award of Bachelor of Education (Arts) degrees. The first 600 candidates were drawn from the cadre of non-graduate secondary school teachers who had over three years of teaching experience. They follow the same prescribed course of study, syllabuses, examinations and grading as for internal students.

The courses are conducted through distance study methods with print as the main medium of instruction. In addition, there are organised student support services including regional resource and study centres, tutoring and counselling, audio and visual materials and library services. The materials have been developed through a ‘course teams approach’ using part-time academic staff drawn from the four public universities. Tutoring and counselling services are provided by graduate teachers from universities, colleges and secondary schools in the country. Training workshops on distance education techniques and media have been conducted by all staff on a regular basis.

Plans are underway to offer B.Ed. Science degree programmes in 1990, and Law and Business Studies at a later date. There are proposals to introduce post-graduate diploma and masters degree programmes at the U. of Nairobi.

The University is ready to share experiences with other distance education institutions in the Commonwealth and elsewhere in the world.

For further information write:

Principal
College of Education and External Studies
P.O. Box 30197
Nairobi
Kenya

Access For The Disabled through Distance Education

Indira Gandhi National Open University, in collaboration with the Blind Relief Association and the National Society for Equal Opportunities for the Handicapped (NASEOH), has established a Study Centre to make available the resources of the university to students with varying disabilities.

The Centre’s head, Mr. Lal Advani, who is totally blind, is intimately familiar with the problems of disabled students in India as well as ways of coping with these problems. The Study Centre offers courses to all students and supports the policy of integrating disabled and non-disabled students.

The Material Production Wing of the Centre has the facilities to prepare Braille material, audio and video cassettes and offer interpretation in sign languages for the deaf. The Centre is not merely expected to serve a limited number of disabled students in Delhi. It will also function as a resource centre, for any other centre of the university in the country, offering services to disabled students. The establishment of this Centre marks the beginning of a new era by offering Distance Education services to disabled students who make up one of the most disadvantaged sectors of the community.

For more information contact:

Mr. Lal Advani, Study Centre, Head, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Hauz Khas, New Delhi 16, 669668, 669330.
Continuing Professional Education

At the end of April a meeting was convened in London at the Royal Commonwealth Society to allow senior staff from The Commonwealth of Learning to brief members of Commonwealth Professional Associations on the establishment of the Vancouver agency. Dr. James Maraj, President, spoke about the overall aims, and other aspects of the development of the agency were covered by Mr. Peter McMechan, Director, Pacific Programmes and Continuing Professional Education; and Mr. John Quigley, Director, Communications and Technology. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Reg Mason of the Commonwealth Engineers' Council who is the current chairman of the Organisation of Commonwealth Associations.

The meeting was convened by The Commonwealth Foundation, which maintains an overall responsibility for supporting the network of professional groups within the Commonwealth structure, and the 1990 Commonwealth Fellows were also in attendance.

Discussion revolved around the ways in which The Commonwealth of Learning could assist professional associations with the development of viable programmes of continuing professional education. The presence of the twelve Commonwealth Fellows ensured that proper attention was also given to methods for the delivery of appropriate programmes in the various regions of the Commonwealth.

Following the formal meeting on April 26, Peter McMechan, as the director responsible for developing programmes in continuing professional education, was available to discuss with representatives of individual professional associations particular concerns and projects. Several of the health science associations have plans for distance education initiatives which are well advanced. The Commonwealth Trade Union Council, and the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Record Managers are both active in continuing education; and the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults will be a major resource for The Commonwealth of Learning.

The Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the Commonwealth Legal Education Association had just completed a major workshop on contining education in Auckland, New Zealand, in association with the Ninth Commonwealth Law Conference. Initiatives in legal continuing education, law-related training, and public administration had all been major topics; and are of interest to The Commonwealth of Learning as it develops systems which encourage the networking of educational opportunity throughout the Commonwealth.

Events

June 11 - 13
Vancouver. Meeting of Executive Heads of Key Commonwealth Educational Institutions.

July 2 - 4

September 16 - 19
Vancouver. Planning Meeting to develop Co-operative Programmes in Marine Resources Management using distance education techniques.

October 25 - 26
Barbados. Board Meeting of the Commonwealth of Learning.

October 29 - November 2

November 19 - 23
Hong Kong. Conference for Small States on the use of Distance Education in Technical and Vocational Training.

The Commonwealth of Learning has developed a graphic identity that visually represents the organisation's activities. The identity is comprised of a Crest and Logotype. The Crest contains a book which symbolises education and a globe which depicts the nations of the Commonwealth. The two pictograms are visually tied together by converging lines that represent communications technologies. These technologies will be used to transmit distance education programmes, which are unrestricted by the boundaries imposed by time and space, to the people of the Commonwealth.

The crest visually interprets The Commonwealth of Learning's mission to promote the development of human resources through the application of distance education techniques and technologies. It is a strong visual identity which establishes The Commonwealth of Learning as a major international organisation directly concerned with advance in distance education.
Distance educators from all corners of the Commonwealth visited COL headquarters from April 2 – 6, 1990. Their goal was to discuss some of the challenges and problems they face in their day to day work. By the end of the Commonwealth of Learning Round Table on Training, the twelve participants had a clear idea of the state of Distance Education in the Commonwealth. They also had a clear idea of the aims of The Commonwealth of Learning. (See below for list of participants.)

The first two days were devoted to background papers and discussions on the training needs of each of the twelve countries represented. The next three days were spent in group activities in which detailed outlines on target training groups, training objectives, course content, and strategies and resources were produced. The participants then prepared an agenda for action by The Commonwealth of Learning.

Three groups of four participants each concentrated on areas of most interest to each group. Planning, administration and management of Distance Education was scrutinized by the first group. The second group dealt with the application of new technologies, including computers, and the third group examined instructional design and course development. Each group then produced draft course outlines. These will be used later this year in regional Training Workshops.

The first round of regional workshops will be for distance education trainers. It will be in Africa in July, and in Asia in November. The Caribbean and the South Pacific workshops will be held towards the end of 1990.

The papers presented at the Round Table will be published later in the year.

**Participants at the COL Round Table on Training**

Dr. Tom Prebble, Massey U. New Zealand.
Prof. B.N. Koul, IGNOU, India.
Dr. Raj Dhanarajan, OLI, Hong Kong.
Dr. Howard Van Trease, U. of Papua New Guinea.
Dr. Esmond Ramesar, UWI, Trinidad and Tobago.
Mr. Leton Thomas, Sir Arthur Lewis Comm. Coll. St. Lucia.
Prof. E.O. Fagbamije, U. of Lagos, Nigeria.
Mr. Ben Gitau, U. of Nairobi, Kenya.
Dr. Tony Bates, OLA, Richmond, Canada.
Dr. Ifikhar N. Hassan, Alama Iqbal O.U. Pakistan.
Prof. Jocelyn Calvert, Deakin U. Australia.
A Review of Distance Education at the University of the South Pacific

One of the important tasks entrusted to The Commonwealth of Learning is the institution of programmes of research about, and the evaluation of, distance education in the Commonwealth. At the request of the regional University of the South Pacific, the first major project in this framework is a review of the experience of USP after twenty years of off-campus activity throughout the island nations of the South Pacific.

The first Extension Studies students of USP began their enrolment in 1971. Since then, thousands of Pacific islanders have taken courses from USP extension centres in the eleven countries served by the University, and the total off-campus enrolment in 1990 exceeds 7000 in the first semester.

The review, which The Commonwealth of Learning has initiated in association with USP, will chronicle the development of the University’s distance education policies and practices, attempt to signal the challenges that lie ahead, and present some possible options which the University might follow in the future.

The review team has been appointed by Dr. James Maraj, President of The Commonwealth of Learning, after consultation with Mr. Geoffrey Caston, Vice Chancellor, the University of the South Pacific. It is headed by William L. Renwick, Senior Research Fellow, Stout Research Centre for the Study of New Zealand Society History and Culture, Victoria University of Wellington, and from 1975 to 1988 Director-General of Education for New Zealand. A foundation member of the Board of Governors of The Commonwealth of Learning, he has been actively engaged in international education for over two decades.

The other members of the review team are Professor St. Clair King, of the Faculty of Engineering, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad, University of the West Indies; and Dr. Douglas Shale, Office of Institutional Analysis, University of Calgary, Canada, and formerly in a similar role at Athabasca University, Alberta’s distance education institution. Professor King brings to the review experience as a director on the Board of Trinidad and Tobago’s external communications company, as well as his academic and consultancy interests in computers and communications. Dr. Shale’s field of research, and extensive publication, covers a wide range of issues in distance education.

After a number of preliminary activities, the Review Team spent three weeks in the USP Region during April, and they plan to have the first draft of their report completed by the end of June. One of the features of the review will be that the initial draft will be subjected to discussion between USP staff, people in the region served by the University’s extension studies programmes, and the Review Team before a final report is published by The Commonwealth of Learning.

COL and CHOGRAM ’89

The first appearance of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) at a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1989. At the Putra World Trade Centre, the venue for the meeting, COL set up a Demonstration Data Base which was visited by Her Majesty, the Queen, and Commonwealth leaders. The President, Dr. James Maraj, conducted a number of press conferences for the international media. There was general agreement about the surprising degree of progress accomplished since the preceding January when COL had become functional.

COL was on the agenda of the Committee of the Whole. At this Meeting COL presented the first Report of the Board of Governors to Commonwealth Heads of Government which noted COL’s establishment, programme activities and experience. COL was also on the agenda of the Heads of Government themselves and several Heads, led by the President of Gambia and the Prime Minister of Barbados commended the Board and the President and staff on an impressive start. In their Communique, Commonwealth leaders expressed satisfaction with COL’s progress and reaffirmed their belief in the institution’s potential to accelerate human resource development through distance education techniques.

Heads of Government called for greater financial support, especially towards COL’s core budget, and noted that there were now twice as many countries contributing as before.
Study Fellowship Programme

COL's First Fellow

Christine Marrett of UWI.

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has implemented a Study Fellowships Programme. The major objectives of this Programme are to enhance the professional development of the Fellows through carefully structured programmes featuring visitations to institutions, universities and colleges, and presentations at the COL headquarters. Each Fellow follows a programme tailored to his/her particular interests.

The Study Fellowships Programme was developed in close cooperation with the Government of British Columbia which provided a major part of the funds for this venture. Dr. Dennis Wing, principal of North Island College, provided academic supervision for the initial group of Fellows with support from COL staff.

Ten Fellows visited The Commonwealth of Learning between the months of July and September. They were Mr. P. Chitamun, Head of the Education Studies Department, Ministry of Education, Mauritius; Mr. G. Galo, Acting Director, Solomon Islands Centre University of South Pacific; Mr. O. Khalid, Assistant Director, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam; Dr. A.W. Khan, Director, Communication Division, Indira Gandhi National Open University, India; Ms. S.I.W. Kulantungu, Copy Editor, Educational Technology Centre, the Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka; Mrs. E. Ligate, Director, South Africa Extension Unit, Tanzania; Ms. E.C. Marratt, Project Officer of the University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE); Dr. M.J. Matshazi, Chairman, Department of Adult Education, University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe; Mr. A. Mkhwanazi, Director, Division of Extramural Services, University of Swaziland, Swaziland; Mr. S. Small, Director, Institute of Adult and continuing Education, University of Guyana, Guyana.