

Connections



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COL restructures programme delivery

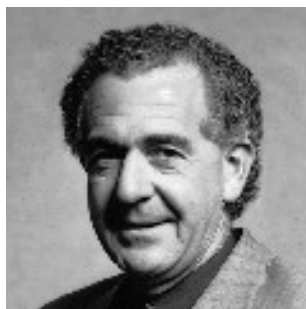
Extensive staff and management reorganisation was approved by COL's Board of Governors and became effective on July 1, 1996. In response to wide consultations, the new structure is designed to provide a more responsive and flexible approach to programme delivery through a flatter and less-hierarchical organisational base. COL's President and C.E.O., **Dato' Dr. Gajaraj Dhanarajan**, also announced the appointment of his two chief deputies under this new structure.

Mr. Peter McMechan has taken up responsibilities as Director, Regions, ensuring that COL's programmes and projects are delivered and reported effectively in all regions. A New Zealander, McMechan has been serving as a staff member since the organisation was established in 1989. Previously, he headed the university extension programme of the University of Otago in New Zealand and before that at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji.

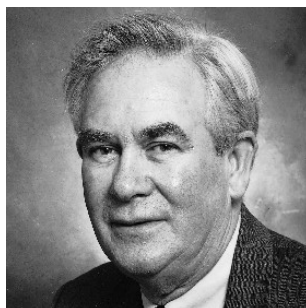
Dr. Ian Mugridge has joined the staff as Director, Programmes, supervising the application of distance education and technological expertise for COL's programmes and clients. Mugridge is a former assistant Vice President of Simon Fraser University (British Columbia, Canada), was the founding principal of British Columbia's Open University, and has been a senior consultant to COL since 1992. He has also been Vice President (North America) of the International Council for Distance Education.

In addition to governance matters, the President's Office will oversee all aspects of administration and finance, including the development of COL's business opportunities and network of consultants. Dhanarajan was appointed to the Presidency of the organisation in September 1995 after completing a five-year term as Director of the Open Learning Institute in Hong Kong. He is a Malaysian citizen with a rich academic and leadership background. Following his appointment, COL's Board of Governors was restructured; and the new Board, in turn, approved the restructuring of the organisation itself.

The three senior staff members are drawn from countries that are also playing significant



Peter McMechan



Ian Mugridge

roles in the organisation's work and in providing its voluntary funding. Canada and the Province of British Columbia have been sustaining supporters from the beginning. New Zealand has recently announced a significant increase in the level of its contribution. And Malaysia has accepted an invitation for its Education Secretary to serve as an Adviser to the agency's Board of Governors and has joined the funding partnership with a recently announced two-year commitment, contributing RM 125,000 (Cdn.\$68,300) annually to COL's core funding base.

Regional representation

To complement the staff reorganisation, several Regional Advisers to the President have been selected to represent the organisation throughout the Commonwealth. In partnership with key institutions in the regions, distinguished staff members or associates have been designated to take on additional responsibilities on COL's behalf. Liaison officers have also been designated within COL's professional staff. Regional Advisers are listed in the box on page 3.

COL's President, **Dato' Dr. Gajaraj Dhanarajan**, and Chairman, **Dr. H. Ian Macdonald**, have also been assisted recently by useful consultations with senior officials in Australia, Britain, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, India, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore and at Caribbean and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education meetings (CARICOM and SEAMEO). They have been encouraged by indications of continuing support. Dr. Macdonald is also representing COL at this month's annual meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers, next month's Commonwealth Senior Officials policy development meeting, and the Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs to be held in November.

Tonga doubles contribution

A number of other encouraging responses have been received recently to COL's request for increased support from member countries. The Kingdom of Tonga, a small Pacific islands nation, with a GNP of less than US\$150 million, has nearly doubled its previous annual contribution with a cheque for over Cdn.\$16,000; and Cdn.\$2,500 has been received from the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a country that has until now been unable to contribute. As noted above, Malaysia is also contributing for the first time this year.

Alternate funding

COL continues to leverage its resources through increased collaboration and joint project initiatives with other agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), the Commonwealth Youth Programme, and the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE).

Development of additional, non-governmental sources of project funding has been a priority. A number of projects are being proposed involving regional development banks, foundations, la Francophonie and the World Bank. In May 1996, COL was selected by the Asian Development Bank to undertake a Cdn.\$500,000 regional technical assistance project on its behalf.

ET 2000 a success

COL's *Educational Technology 2000* conference was held in Singapore last month and attended by nearly 200 participants from 38 (mostly Commonwealth) countries, with the largest representations from India and South Africa. Technical demonstrations were an integral part of most of the 68 concurrent sessions.

COL plans to publish a special issue of COMLEARN (our now less frequent thematic news publication) later this year to provide some detailed reporting on the conference and proceedings. Evaluations from those in attendance were very positive and COL has received several requests for the event to be held on an annual basis.

ET 2000 was co-sponsored by the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre in Singapore.

COL in Action

Technical Teacher Training in the Caribbean

A pilot programme for training technical teachers in the Caribbean by distance education has commenced with a workshop to train tutors and co-ordinators from the four countries selected for the pilot. One institution from each country is participating in the pilot: The Bahamas Hotel Training College, Erdiston Teachers' Training College (Barbados), Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (St. Lucia) and the Vocational Training Development Institute (Jamaica). Each site will enrol ten students, most of whom will be uncertified teachers already working in the technical training system.

This project originated in 1991 when COL's Tech/Voc Reference Group met in Vancouver and determined that teacher education was a high priority in this area and a distance education programme to address this concern should first be initiated in the Caribbean. (The Tech/Voc Reference Group is comprised of fourteen specialists from across the Commonwealth that were nominated to assist COL with decisions regarding the organisation's work in Technical/Vocational Education and Training.)

Since then, an eleven-module core curriculum was developed that meets the pedagogical requirements of technical teachers in the region. Following this, a survey was done to find resources that might match the requirements of this competency-based programme and so avoid expensive duplication. To ensure all materials were presented in a similar format, a *Style Guide* was produced and contracts offered for the development of the first learning units. Seven of the 42 units of the programme are now complete, having been developed in both Australia and the Caribbean.

It was a very enthusiastic group that met last month in Barbados for the workshop. The participants left with the basic knowledge and skills to implement the pilot, as well as with copies of the units to be implemented. They also developed an implementation plan which includes an orientation seminar for students scheduled for the first week of October.



At Barbados workshop: Robynn Bowe-Robert, of The Bahamas Hotel Training College, discovering the importance of good instructional design in distance education learning materials.

The tutors and co-ordinators have the full support of their institutions and Ministries of Education as they commence the pilot.

Close contact will be maintained between the tutors and co-ordinators from the four countries and COL to provide them with the support they will need. Monthly teleconferences will also be initiated from COL's Vancouver headquarters.

COL would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who have been involved in the development of this programme since 1991. We hope they will share in the satisfaction of knowing that it has now reached implementation of the pilot. To the staff and institutions involved, COL extends best wishes and continued support.

70 COL Fellows halfway to their Masters

Over 70 of the 100 students enrolled in COL's Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme have now written their first year final exams. Most were successful and can expect to complete their Masters in Distance Education degree by August of next year – without ever having left home. Located throughout the Commonwealth, the students are educators that have been selected for this opportunity by Ministries of Education in 15 different countries.

The programme of study is offered through the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in India and tutoring services are provided by senior educators in each location that have been engaged by COL and trained by IGNOU staff. As a part of this second year of the programme, students will be active with a local project. Both internal and external evaluations of the programme are also underway.

An orientation programme for second year tutors will be conducted next month in New Delhi by IGNOU's Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE).

Tourism Course Materials

Adding to its growing list of such resources, COL has acquired rights to three sets of "adventure tourism management" training materials. The three courses, *Starting in Adventure Tourism*, *Guiding and Operating Skills*, and *Managing your Operation*, were produced by the Open Learning Agency of British Columbia (Canada). Copies are available from COL as models for use by publicly funded educational institutions in developing Commonwealth countries.





Laboratory technician training

Having acquired the rights to use SciTech DIOL (UK) laboratory technician training materials, COL provided copies to India's Indira Gandhi National Open University. In turn, with support from both COL and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the University hosted a workshop on the use and adaptation of the materials for participants from six open universities located in the four South Asian Commonwealth countries – all of which plan to develop courses based on the material. The Nepal National Commission for UNESCO also took part. The workshop took place in May 1996.

A similar workshop, scheduled to take place in Zambia in November, will be co-sponsored by UNESCO (through the World Federation of Technology Organisations), the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa and COL. Participants, to be drawn from polytechnics and universities in five African countries, will work toward developing a common curriculum for the training of laboratory technicians by distance.

Open schooling

COL is providing Commonwealth Governments with information on the latest advances in open schooling strategies and encouraging the development such programmes. With assistance from UNICEF and Pakistan's Allama Iqbal Open University, COL is also organising an international workshop on the use of open schooling to overcome barriers to educational opportunities for girls and women. The workshop will be held in November 1996 in Islamabad as part of the university's 20th anniversary celebrations. Participation has been invited from throughout South Asia as well as from Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Botswana gains new college

In Botswana, COL is assisting with the reorganisation and upgrading of the Department of Non-Formal Education to become the Botswana Distance Education College. The conversion will take place next year.

Commonwealth studies need support

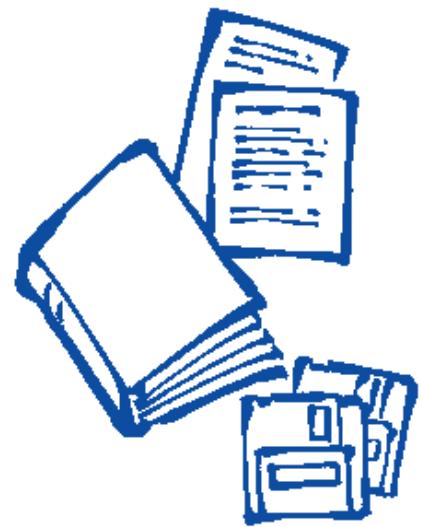
Describing the present levels of awareness and understanding of the Commonwealth as "truly appalling," an international group of senior academics and education professionals has called on the academic community to encourage higher education studies on the modern Commonwealth.

The Commission on Commonwealth Studies also said that many Commonwealth countries today face similar challenges in areas of public policy and institutional reform which, if studied, could have great practical and academic value for the 21st century.

The Commission was appointed by the Commonwealth Secretary-General in

June 1995 and released its report in June of this year. The report contains 11 principal recommendations for the consideration of Commonwealth Heads of Government and Education Ministers, and a further 32 for the academic community, Commonwealth organisations and the private sector. The potential role of both distance education and The Commonwealth of Learning were viewed positively by the Commission.

The nine-member group was chaired by Professor Thomas Symons, founding President and Vanier Professor of Trent University in Canada, and included Dato' Dr. Gajraj Dhanarajan, President of COL.



Commonwealth studies course material

Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Canada has developed a distance education course entitled *The British Empire and Commonwealth* and is offering to share the materials with institutions in both Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries. The offer carries no purchase price or fees.

The course provides an outline history of the British Empire, its rise and decline, and discusses that origin and significance of the modern Commonwealth. It also includes a detailed account of the Westminster Model of parliamentary democracy, upon which the political institutions of many nations are based.

The university's offer includes the provision of the software for a textbook, study guide, and various primary and secondary source documents. A "hard copy" of the course reader would also be supplied, but responsibility for copyright clearance for use of any of its contents would lie with the acquiring institution.

SFU expects that some institutions would wish to add collections of readings relevant to their own country or region and/or to develop an alternative study guide.

Enquiries can be addressed to The Commonwealth of Learning or directly to Dr. Colin Yerbury, Director, Centre for Distance Education, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5A 1S6 (Fax: 604.291.4964).

COL's Regional Advisers to the President

Caribbean and the University of the West Indies:

Dr. Dennis Irvine, former COL Director of Caribbean Programmes and Vice Chancellor of the University of Guyana.

Western Africa:

Professor N.K. Pecku, Principal, University College of Education of Winneba, Ghana.

Eastern Africa:

Professor Geoffrey Mmari, Vice Chancellor, Open University of Tanzania, and former Vice Chancellor of both the University of Dar es Salaam and the Sokoine University of Agriculture.

Southern Africa:

Mr. Jakes Swartland, Permanent Secretary, Botswana Ministry of Education and former Assistant Director responsible for the Education Department, Human Resources Development Division, Commonwealth Secretariat.

Southeast Asia and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO):

Dato' Dr. Sharom Ahmat, President, Kolej Disted, Penang, Malaysia and former Dean and Deputy Vice Chancellor at the Universiti Sains Malaysia (University of Science Malaysia). Dato' Sharom also spent nine years in Brunei advising on the establishment of academic programmes at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

Appointments of Advisers for other regions are in the process of being formalised. All of these new arrangements will build on long-time working relationships that COL has developed with national and regional institutions, such as India's Indira Gandhi National Open University, the University of the South Pacific, and the UK Open University; distance education associations and COL's Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia.

People

Ms. Jenny Glennie, Director of the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) was elected President of the newly formed National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa (NADEOSA) at its founding conference in August. Also at the conference, **Mr. John Samuel**, Deputy Director-General of Education for South Africa, presented the challenge that South Africa needs to develop an entirely new educational paradigm as a basis for the fundamental restructuring of the education system. Mr. Samuel is also Vice President for Africa of the International Council for Distance Education and joined COL's restructured Board of Governors this year. Representing organisations which serve in excess of 500,000 distance learners, NADEOSA is positioned to become a major force in educational transformation.

At the University of the West Indies, COL Board member and University Pro-Vice Chancellor, **Dr. Marlene Hamilton** has moved from responsibility for student and alumni relations to overseeing undergraduate studies. She is located at the Mona campus in Jamaica. And former Trinidad & Tobago Permanent Secretary of Education, **Dr. Claudia Harvey**, has been appointed Director of Distance Education and is located at the University's Cave Hill campus in Barbados.

COL Board Chairman, **Dr. H. Ian Macdonald**, has been appointed Chairman of the Board of McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, a leading educational and trade book publisher in Canada. Dr. Macdonald has had a distinguished career in academia and in government, and has been a member of the company's Board for eleven years. He is also President Emeritus of York University (Canada).

Dr. Claire Matthewson, former Director of University Extension at the University of the South Pacific, is now located in Vancouver, Canada, as Programme Director, International Projects at Simon Fraser University's Centre for Distance Education. Dr. Matthewson is Immediate Past President of the Pacific Islands Regional Association for Distance Education (PIRADE) and has worked on COL consultancies and expert teams. The SFU Centre is currently managing projects in Ghana, the Philippines, Cuba and the South Pacific.

The Commonwealth distance education community is saddened to learn of the sudden and unexpected death of **Professor John Chick**. Professor Chick was attached to the Department of Administrative, Higher and Adult Education Studies at the University of New England (UNE), in Armidale, NSW, Australia and Director of the University's Institute for Studies in Open Learning and Distance Education (ISOLDE). Formerly, he was Director of Distance Education for UNE, Director of External Studies and Continuing Education at the University of Queensland and Director of Extension Services at the University of the South Pacific. He had also been associated with COL as a consultant, research contributor, expert participant and friend. He will be missed.

Events

2nd Lifelong Learning Conference

The Second Global Conference on Lifelong Learning will be held in Ottawa, Canada, from March 23 - 26, 1997. With the theme, *Investing in Human Potential: Making Strategic Choices*, the goal of the conference is to produce action strategies for lifelong learning for the 21st century. It will be an interactive event, with active participation and contribution expected from each of the anticipated 1000 delegates. In fact, potential delegates will be invited to join Internet "round-table" discussion groups several months prior to the conference.

Confirmed keynote speakers include: Dr. Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, and Mr. Bill Etherington, Chairman of IBM Ltd.

The event is being organised by The Canadian Alliance for Lifelong Learning, in co-operation with The World Initiative on Lifelong Learning, and has a growing list of major sponsors. Contact: CALL, 20 Bay Street, Suite 400, Toronto, ON, Canada M5J 2W1; tel: 416.325.4211; fax: 416.325.4675; e-mail: call@gsro.carleton.ca; WWW: <http://gcll.carleton.ca>

Audio-visual media in distance education

The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) jointly conducted a three-day workshop for senior managers of India's many correspondence institutes and open schools (Hyderabad: May 1996). The purpose of the workshop was to expose participants to the potential of audio-visual media and how to make effective use of the ever-expanding reach of these and other electronic media in the delivery of distance learning courses.

In a keynote address, Mr. Kiran Karnik, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Discovery Channel, demonstrated how education is becoming an important business commodity and advised educational institutions to take full advantage of the unprecedented growth in use of electronic media. Senior personnel from several other educational and media organisations in India also participated as resource people.

Audio-tape production

A workshop on the production of audio-tapes as supplementary materials for print-based distance education courses was conducted in May 1996 by the Audio-Visual Division of the Barbados Ministry of Education. The event was co-sponsored by COL and the Canada Training Awards Programme (as a part of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States' Distance Education Pilot Project) and drew participation from throughout the Eastern Caribbean, including Barbados.

Publications

Publications requests

Requests for Commonwealth of Learning publications are now being handled on behalf of COL by the customer service department of the Open Learning Agency of British Columbia. Nominal charges apply to orders from *developed, newly developed and non-Commonwealth* countries - usually Cdn.\$12.00 plus shipping. Orders must be accompanied by an institutional purchase order, be pre-paid in either Canadian or US funds, or charged to VISA or MasterCard accounts. Requests may be sent directly to: COL Customer Service, c/o the Open Learning Agency of BC, 4355 Mathissi Place, Burnaby BC V5G 4S8; Canada; tel: 604.431.3210; fax: 604.431.3381; e-mail: catalogue@ola.bc.ca.

Summary Report 1994 - 1996

Replacing "annual reports" for this period, COL has published and distributed its *Summary Report 1994 - 1996*. The document provides readers with information on COL's programme activities, publications and financial positions from January 1, 1994 to June 30, 1996. The report is available free-of-charge and is on the World Wide Web at <http://www.col.org/annual96.htm>.

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Further details on any news item that appears in *Connections* may be obtained by contacting COL's Public Affairs Office, or visiting our World Wide Web site.

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