



Newsletter

January, February and March 2012

From the Office of the President

It was during this quarter that the planned resignation of Dr. Minas Hiruy, the Founding President of Hope University College was made public. Dr. Minas, who would turn 62 in June, told his friends and supporters that he had labored for the previous 26 years to bring cheer and hope to thousands of the needy and he regarded the founding of the college as the crowning of a collective effort. Believing that the time had come for him to step down and give others the opportunity to serve, he asked the Board to search for a person who is strong on sustaining the values and vision of Hope and raising the necessary resources to attend to the needy. He arranged with the Board to stay on until the end of December while his replacement is recruited and acclimated. Following the framing of the recruitment criteria by both the Advisory Board and the Board, a job ad was to be placed in newspapers and circulated through Ethiojobs, an online employment agency. The Board set up an ad-hoc recruitment committee from its members, the advisory board and the senior management of the college to oversee the recruitment.



Our Dutch partners reporting their findings to the Senate

Dr. Minas, who has been responsible for the fundraising of the institution, submitted an institutional fundraising strategy that could be applied following his departure. Dr. Minas based his proposal on three Ps: personal relationship, passion and projects. He pointed out that the multi-annual plan gives the targets and different fund accounts for, for instance, grants, student sponsorships, fee payers and income generation can be in place under respective managers to meet the targets. Dr. Minas indicated that eventually the university college will fully rely on primarily student fees with an increase in enrollment availing opportunities for self financing.

The Advisory Board was very active during the quarter meeting on January 31st and March 23, 2012. Sir Alec Reed, the Chairperson of the Trustees of Ethiopiaid, visited us with his wife and attended the meeting of January 31st. During this meeting, Sir Reed indicated difficulties in raising funding on account of the slowdown of the economy. People from the President's Alma Mater, Sterling College of the USA and delegations from our Dutch friends, Dronen University and Christian University of Ede visited us. The Dutch groups assisted in the framing of the new academic programs and evaluation of the application of the Competency Based Training. We were also visited by professors from Calvin College of the USA, who spoke during our reflection hour. It was also great to see Mr. Hans Treurniet, the donor of the college's master plan.

The university college completed its multi-annual plan for five years and submitted the same to the Board and our partners. In the multi-annual plan, a total of 13 departments are anticipated to be incorporated enrolling 2,150 students at full capacity. The external audit of 2011 was completed. Slowly but surely, the university college began to make a name for itself. On March 7, we were visited by 32 vice presidents and top level officials of many of the federal universities of Ethiopia. We offered a seminar on IT solutions and student development to similar officials few weeks later. Similarly, in January, we hosted the municipality for a conference on developing our growing area. It was also during this quarter, Hope University College became a member of the Association of Private Colleges and Universities of Ethiopia. Last but certainly not least we completed first semester by the end of March.



Our students find on-line learning a real winner.

Academic Affairs

Continuous assessment early in the quarter showed that student achievement was not up to par with expectations. This reading taught the university college a lot about student preparation and motive to inform future approaches. It became clear that the main culprit was not student motivation but wanting preparation for college education and the factor of evident disjoint between the college's emphasis on scholarship and the preference of most students to just focus on notes to pass exams. Tutorial programs in particularly English and mathematics were put in place using original English speakers and part-timers. Students, who were far behind, were required to use the library and the computer laboratories for certain hours a day contending this discipline would help. This remedial package was introduced to the entire student body by the executive team during our reflection time. The Advisory Board's advice in applying continuous and varied assessment was applied and recommendations to introduce study and reading skills were accepted.



Small class room settings make a difference.

With these efforts first semester ended on March 27. However, despite some progress, student performance left much to be desired. The evaluations of the academic program and of the staff also had a lot to teach. It was very clear that the faculty had to spend more time with students tutoring, counseling and mentoring than had been the case. Here again with the standing tradition of the faculty revolving mainly around lecturing and leaving, the university college had to work hard against this crack.



Exams are one of our testing instruments.

While the search for a regular vice president for academic affairs continued, Dr. Mulugeta Abebe of Addis Ababa University was temporarily hired during the second portion of his sabbatical to assist Dr. Minas in academic affairs. Dr. Mulugeta came with valuable experiences and started to assist in the important work of developing the new departments starting from January 1. The plan was to introduce three departments in the science and technology area in keeping with the government's requirement of 70% of our programs having to focus on science and technology and the remaining on social science. The Senate had met during its designated time to consider many academic issues. It also worked on quality assurance based on the recommendations of the director, Dr. Doug Holland.

A team of three experts namely, Ms. Yolanda Berntsen, Ms. Olga Kujawska and Prof. Lok from Dronen Agricultural University and Christian University of Ede of the Netherlands came during the last week of March to assist in two academic developments. Ms. Berntsen and Kujawska focused on assessing the new proposed departments while the Professor assessed the progress in applying Competency Based Training or CBT. Dr. Mulugeta hosted the first group taking it to companies, educational institutions and government agencies for fact finding and demand assessment. The group put its observations and presented its findings to the Senate. It affirmed that the disciplines of food science and environment science were in demand and proposed to incorporate them along with the earlier addition of architecture. The Senate, upon hearing such feedback, endorsed the additions. Soon after, the writing of the curriculum for each discipline began for presentation to a stakeholders' meeting next quarter.

Professor Lok had a lot to do surveying students and staff on the application of CBT. The Office of Academic Affairs earlier conveyed that CBT was slow in being acclimatized as students had difficulties in catching up with basic curricular concepts for essentially the difficulties in English and mathematics. Professor Lok presented his findings to the senior management and the entire faculty. To him, it was clear that CBT could still be applied contending that the problem was not as such poor preparation. He found out that while the passion to learn among students was high, considering wanting contact and mentoring on the part of the faculty, desired outcomes in CBT application could not be gained. This led the Senate to emphasize contact hours and to strengthen the faculty's role in advising and coaching. The management appreciated this finding, which acknowledged resistance to genuine student centered teaching given an entrenched authoritarian culture and disdain in putting the time to help develop emerging personalities.

At the same time further preparations for the next academic year continued. Assuming the accreditation of the cited three departments, we planned to have 650 students during the regular day program and 250 students at night next academic year. We have been fortunate to have had the physical facilities to manage yearly expansion up to 2016. For all that we could see, with a growing number of residential quarters being built up in our neighborhood, the number of people moving into the area increased beyond our expectation. This trend has meant better possibilities to expand our student population.



Library use is increasing slowly.

Student Life

As achievement expectations played a prominent part in student life, material gaps posed difficulties for most of the students who were admitted on deferred payment basis. Some students, being so helpless, faced hunger. Granted these students were admitted on condition that they could support themselves after we had no success in raising sponsorship for living allowances for needy students. Later, we found out that those students who promised to take care of their needs, were so much in need that hunger became the lot of many. Upon realizing this difficulty, the university college embarked on a rescue effort by introducing a work study program following funding by Woord and Daad. The work study program involved 52 students. It had a slow start initially with college students often not doing menial work to make ends meet. Then the President, using his own experience of earning his way out of college, urged many to take their work study opportunities seriously. This example touched a chord and many students joined the program assisting with works like gardening, custodial service, clerical work, guarding, etc. It soon became clear that the work study was a blessing not only by way of additional income to the involved students but of character formation.



Our library is the center of attention.

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Secondly, the staff put up some money to buy lunch for forty of our students for each school day. The lunch was bought from our sister division, the Ladders of Hope, at cost and it was great to see how that square meal renewed body and mind for better performance and spirits. Then to help with the remaining needs, a number of other inputs surfaced. What was most surprising was the students began to have certain initiatives to help the least fortunate among them. There was one team that organized a shoe shining day and raised money shining shoes. Another team had a carnival on campus that was very successful. Then emerged a student initiative to raise vegetables on campus. Based on a well worked out proposal prepared and submitted by some students, all that the college was asked for was space for the garden and water. The request was honored and it was thrilling to see students working the land for the planting of various vegetables. Girls were quite active in these efforts considering their need. These self help efforts were certainly what the college wanted to develop and it was great to see most of our students involved in one initiative or another of the type.

Another surprise for us was the minimal demand for counseling. Though many of our students came from the rural areas, they adjusted fast despite the speed of things in the biggest city in the country. The students certainly did their best to bear one another's burdens. While the majority of our students were women, one also noted similar success in adjustment though campuses on the whole have not had a good reputation for being great comfort zones for them. The student parliament met and chose its representatives to the Senate.

Construction, Equipping and Furnishing

The work on the correction of the troubled technical building proceeded with the finishing aspect being completed by the contractor. The pile foundation that was in place seemed to be a proper response much to our relief. An effort was made to review how much of the improvements that were stipulated were actually achieved. Mr. Niek Hoffius, the project manager of the construction project, came from Holland to spearhead the review with the contractor and the consultant. It was noted that there was still much to go and the final handover was pending. In this regard, the roof leaks of the library and the multi-purpose hall became a continuing menace. Similarly, the new booster pumps that were installed in January continued to malfunction despite recurrent repairs. A new handover time was set in April giving enough time for the rectifications.

Upon clearing the shipment of IP telephony at the airport, we realized that the Call Manager and the Wi-Fi Manager were missing. We brought this matter to Global Computing Solutions (GCS), the contractor, who has been digitalizing our campus by importing ICT hardware directly. We had written a letter to the company for a replacement. Ethio Dutch Furniture handed over the final batch of furniture and its last payment was executed. In all the investment works, this company delivered as expected and we are very thankful for its efforts. The process of selecting and purchasing a transformer from Holland was finalized and the transformer is planned to be shipped next quarter. The same is to happen with a diesel generator that was donated by a company from the same country.

As the closure of the project of construction draws near, we are realizing how much we had spent for taxes and duties, which the project proposal did not anticipate being a charitable operation. Hence, we anticipate to face a modest financial gap during the final handover of the buildings.



Our campus is attractive and we thank you for making it happen.

Administration and Finance

Our remarkable multi-purpose hall was put to use as we had planned. Given the limited use of the

facility by the college, we had planned to rent the building during times when the college had no need of it. We have been looking for institutions, churches and even companies that may need the hall. After finding out that churches in particular were interested, we put up a bid for the use of the hall on Sundays, Saturday afternoons and Wednesday evenings. Two churches, Kale Heywet Church and Beza International Church took part in the bid and the latter won with the rental being in effect starting from January 1.

The CFO of Woord & Daad, Mr. Arnold Willigen, visited us examining our books of account and management on March 26. On the whole while he was pleased with our accounting system and statements, he wanted us to work harder to make our finances sustainable. Sustainability is a challenge that we had grappled with at a time when our enrollment is low on one hand and expenses are high on the other. We are in essence facing the challenge of starting organizations which face high start-up costs with limited clientele. The five year plan that we had developed envisions that we will be fully self financing at full capacity in four years. Up to then, we need all the help that we can get though in declining amounts.

During the quarter, the university college had 49 full time staff members and seven part-time staff members. Of the above staff pool, there were five volunteers from the United States, Ireland and Sweden. We have been pleased with the performance of the volunteers, who have had quite an impact on students. The night school continued to run well as we used our day staff members on a top up pay basis using the number of credit hours of courses taught.

The staff formed a credit association, which elected its leaders and gained legal personality. The advisory board met twice on January 31 and March 23 on campus. The Advisory Board examined the college's plan of action and budget and approved the same. At the same time, given the president's resignation in view, it wanted the President to develop how the fundraising of the college can be institutionalized enabling sustainable financing. The President submitted his proposal during the second meeting and the Advisory Board accepted it with minor modifications. The proposal was then submitted to the Board and accepted as well.

The visitors from Sterling College, headed by Christian Dashiell, explored possibilities on how the college can cooperate by way of student visits. The delegation from Calvin College had Professors Jonathan Bascom and Cal Jen who spoke during the reflection on values and entrepreneurship respectively.

How you can help

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The vision of HUC is to provide quality education that produces graduates who combine knowledge, skills and values to contribute to the renewal and transformation of Ethiopia. HUC believes all students should be in a setting where they develop a love of learning driven by creativity and curiosity, and also a desire to make their communities a place of hope, justice, peace and progress.

We value each student and desire to involve them in an educational process that develops them to their full potential. In this initiative, we believe that no student who has the thirst for learning should be left behind. For students of financial need, we are currently looking for student sponsorships for the 2012-2013 academic year.

For more information or to make a donation, please visit our website or contact us in our office. Thank you for your support!