

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

**THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, USA**

And

**CENTRAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, ACCRA, GHANA**

### **1. Purpose of the Agreement**

The purpose of this Memorandum is to establish a collaborative relationship between the Organization, Information, and Learning Sciences (OILS) Program, formerly known as the Organizational Learning and Instructional Technology (OLIT) Program in the College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences at the University of New Mexico, (UNM) Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A., and the School of Applied Sciences, Central University College, (CUC) Accra, Ghana. It is founded on mutual respect between the two institutions and the recognition that the aims of the two organizations are similar, i.e. to use distance learning technologies and methods to train medical practitioners who provide care to rural and underserved populations.

### **2. Background of the Agreement**

- A. The State of New Mexico has a significant rural population and UNM has depended on a variety of distance education formats (correspondence, instructional television, video conferencing online education, eLearning, and mobile learning) over the past twenty-five years to deliver both undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs and degrees. In the OILS program, both masters and doctoral students are trained for careers in the fields of distance education, online education, eLearning, and mobile learning. In addition, OILS maintains an international research program in these fields. Students are trained to be online course designers, teachers, coordinators, faculty development specialists, evaluators, researchers, and managers of distance education programs. In addition, UNM has a centralized distance education operation for the whole university, named Extended University, which offers academic programs at a distance and conducts faculty development programs. The University Libraries plays a key role in providing e-Library resources to support distance education at the University.
- B. The doctor-patient ratio in Ghana and indeed many parts of Africa is at an all-time low. The effects of brain drain can be felt in almost all professions and more so in the medical profession than in others. This, coupled with the long period of training

needed to produce a single doctor and the limited capacity of providing institutions, makes it imperative that a more cost effective, rapid and effective solution be found to the problem of scarcity of medical personnel. It is with this in mind that Central University College (CUC) is proposing to offer the Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Physician Assistantship at a distance. The mission of these programs is to train professional health care providers who can effectively function in areas where there are no doctors. These professionals would then help to improve the availability of primary health care to underserved populations in West Africa.

- C. On 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2008, CUC created a Physicians Assistants Program through the School of Applied Sciences. In September 2010 Dr. Aflakpui, Head of the Department of Physician Assistants, presented a paper at the International Academy of Physician Associates Educators, at their third annual conference, where he suggested the use of mobile technology to increase access to the Physician Assistants Program. In April 2013, Dr. Aflakpui in collaboration with Prof. Gunawardena and her students in the OILS program at UNM and Canadian partners secured funding from Grand Challenges Canada, Stars in Global Health funding initiative to offer the Physician Assistant Program at a distance using mobile and eLearning technologies.

### 3. Description of the Collaboration

The objectives of the program are to train graduates who will possess the ability to evaluate the health status of an individual, diagnose and treat acute illness, manage chronic disease, deliver preventive care, and counsel individuals on psychosocial problems in collaboration with a physician. In order to bring this program to reality, and ensure dissemination at scale of this program, Central University College wishes to be affiliated with the University of New Mexico. Both Central University College and University of New Mexico wish to develop collaborative efforts in the following areas, and with the following assumptions:

- A. Central University College and University of New Mexico will work together to establish the Distance Physician Assistant Program in West Africa in cooperation with the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS). The University of New Mexico will provide technical assistance in distance learning, eLearning, mobile learning design, methods, delivery, management, evaluation and research.
- B. Central University College will introduce and mount the degree of BSc/MSc in Physician Assistant Studies at a distance to train Physician Assistants serving in rural communities of Ghana.
- C. Central University College and the University of New Mexico will work together to determine the appropriate strategies for delivering a Physician Assistants program in a blended format.

- D. The University of New Mexico would provide guidance in the creation of an online community of practice (CoP), and a network of computer labs where students can access online content and be linked to digital mentors.
- E. Central University College will arrange for appropriate medical facilities and physician supervision for the clinical rotations required of the students in the Physician Assistant Program.
- F. Central University College would provide or seek partnership to provide guidance for the didactic and clinical phases of the program to ensure the quality of the curriculum and the competency of the graduates.
- G. To ensure a cross-fertilization of ideas and experience, the University of New Mexico will provide assistance in faculty training and development in regards to distance learning, eLearning, and mobile learning.
- H. The University of New Mexico will work together with Central University College to conduct evaluation and research studies on this project, and apply to funding bodies, e.g. foundations, impact investors, etc. to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the project.
- I. Both institutions will facilitate student exchange for the purpose of academic or clinical experiences.
- J. Any other mutually beneficial consideration can be added to this Memorandum upon mutual approval of said consideration.

**4. Contract Persons for the Collaboration**

Each partner institution will designate a contact person responsible for the management of the Memorandum and the collaboration.

**A. For the Central University College:**

Dr. Benjamin Ernest Aflakpui  
 Head of the Department of Physician Assistants, and  
 Principal Investigator and Project Director, Grand Challenges Canada Stars in Global Health Program  
 Central University College  
 Accra, Ghana  
 Phone: (233) 208123699  
 E-Mail: [baflakpui@central.edu.gh](mailto:baflakpui@central.edu.gh), [baflakpui@yahoo.com](mailto:baflakpui@yahoo.com)

**B. For the University of New Mexico:**

Charlotte Nirmalani (Lani) Gunawardena, Ph.D.  
 Regents Professor  
 Co-Investigator, Grand Challenges Canada Stars in Global Health Program  
 Organization, Information, and Learning Sciences (OILS) Program  
 College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences

MSC 05 3020  
1 University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001, USA  
Phone: 505-277-5046  
E-Mail: [iani@unm.edu](mailto:iani@unm.edu)

**5. Exchange Program Review**

Both institutions will be responsible for a regular review of the exchange program on at least a two yearly basis. The review is essential in order to make appropriate and mutually agreed modifications as may be required and to identify new opportunities for co-operation in scholarship and research.

**5. Period of Agreement**

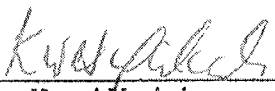
This agreement will come into effect from the date of signature by both parties and will remain in force for five years and may be renewed by mutual consent. Either party provided three months written notice is given to the other party may terminate the agreement.

**6. Signatures:**

*This agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties. No amendments, consent or waiver terms of this agreement shall bind either party unless in writing and signed by all parties.*

**FOR CENTRAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE:**

**SIGNING OFFICER**

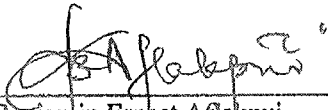


Professor Kwasi Yankah  
President



Date

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**



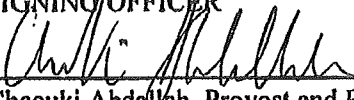
Dr. Benjamin Ernest Aflakpui  
Head, Department of Physician Assistants



Date

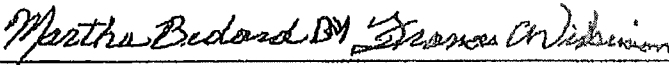
FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

SIGNING OFFICER

  
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Dr. Chaouki Abdallah, Provost and Executive  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

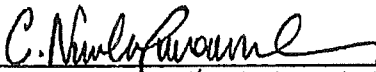
5/30/2013  
Date

DEAN, COLLEGE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES AND LEARNING SCIENCES

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof. Martha Bedard

5/21/13  
Date

CO-INVESTIGATOR

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof. Charlotte Nirmalani (Lani) Gunawardena

5/21/2013  
Date

