

The Goals and Objectives of Law Schools Beyond Educating Students: Research, Capacity Building, Community Service

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INTRODUCTION

Universite Gaston Berger de Saint Louis in Saint Louis, Senegal, was founded in 1990. It consists of four colleges: Literature and Social Sciences, Applied Mathematics and Computers, Economics and Management, and Law and Politics. Gaston Berger's College of Law and Politics was specifically created to reform and modernize the teaching of law, and in particular to incorporate resource management, the political and social environment of the law, and the inter-dependent roles of public and private institutions.

Gaston Berger's College of Law and Politics emphasizes teaching, training and research in the areas of decentralization, local public finance, improvement of local program administration and government-citizen relations--especially in relation to local participation and local decision making. The College of Law and Politics focuses on analysis and support of the democratic transition in Africa. Training and research concentrate on political systems, political parties, elections and voting behavior. A Local Authorities Section was created to support the decentralization movement taking place in Senegal. Teaching and research addresses decentralization, local public finance, improvement of local program administration and citizen/government relations. The Business Law Section works with the College of Economics and Management to analyze the viability of the individual company in the business system. Matters covered also include banking regulation, contract enforcement and transparency in the financial markets. Importantly, Gaston Berger requires that its students, before graduating, be proficient in English and acquire extensive computer skills.

Aside shared experiences with partners as Senegalese Ministry of Justice in hosting a Judiciary Centre for Orientation and Assistance, and several NGO's and Local community's collaboration, Gaston Berger's College of Law and Politics developed an important University-to-University Partnership with the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs University of Massachusetts, Boston (UMB). We will share with you.

On June 2003, Gaston Berger's College of Law and Politics developed a University-to-University Partnership with the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs University of Massachusetts, Boston (UMB) which sought to strengthen, Gaston Berger internally and in its evolving community role through faculty and staff exchange and training, comparative Research (particularly of political systems and political behavior), distance learning, creation of, and access to, internet-based data bases and research libraries, and training in support of local governmental institutions and local economic development.

The partners have developed working strategies to improve both the community's perceptions of the university and the university's ability to work with that community as an employment and economic development engine.

These strategies have culminated in EDDI funding for a multi-function community resource centre established adjacent to the Gaston Berger campus.

This experience was extended to Egerton University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Njoro, Kenya, but didn't succeed with University of Nouakchott, Mauritania.

STATEMENT OF NEED, OBJECTIVES, AND BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

To achieve these goals, the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs of the University of Massachusetts Boston, were joined in a highly successful USAID-supported Partnership in Higher Education.

The success of that earlier Partnership has led directly to EDDI funding for a new multi-function community resource centre (CRC) adjacent to the Gaston Berger campus that was designated to serve the entire Saint Louis area. That CRC included classroom space for civic education, nutrition, women's and children's health, agriculture and other instruction; a women's centre ensuring a private, secure, supportive environment; a small business resource centre to include phone, fax, and email services, internet access, and library/data base resources; and a workshop/warehouse capacity for micro business incubation.

The University-to-University Partnership was proposed in order to improve the quality of, and access to, higher education; to enhance technological capacities and availability at Gaston Berger's College of Law and Politics; and to foster greater campus awareness and community outreach in the areas of civic education, women's rights, economic development, and citizen participation in government.

As noted, the approach was to pattern the partnership where possible upon the successful approach utilized by The McCormack Institute consortium partners, University of Massachusetts Boston.

The University of Massachusetts, Boston is an urban campus, proud of its linkages with its surrounding community, with local and state government, with the private sector and with regional economic development collaborations. As early as a decade ago TIME magazine selected "" as one of "a cadre of fast-climbing colleges challenging the old-line elites," noting its leadership in taking "the land-grant concept of service, research and teaching, and bringing it to the urban area...to be a force in the community." In particular TIME singled out the campus' McCormack Institute for its work with local government to develop programs in housing, juvenile justice, and public finance. (TIME, April 28, 1986, pg.56-7).

The mission of the McCormack Institute, named for the former Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, is public service through public policy research, educational programs, outreach and publications. The Institute also serves as home to the

Master of Science in Public Affairs graduate program and publishes the *New England Journal of Public Policy*.

Since its founding in 1983, the McCormack Institute has grown into the largest public policy research center on its campus, and now consists of four separate but complementary units: the Centers for State and Local Politics; Social Policy; Women in Politics and Public Policy; and Democracy and Development. The Institute also boasts a public opinion polling capacity. Its "McCormack Poll," has become well known for its accuracy and insight, and decisively beat the national polls in its predictions of the 2000 New Hampshire presidential primary results.

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) is the newest of the Institute's component centres, but it has already successfully concluded a notable array of international partnership, educational exchange and training programs. These include a 1995-1996 U.S. Information Agency (USIA) sponsored program for local government officials from Namibia; a 1996 USIA program that brought municipal and provincial legislators from the Peoples Republic of China to Boston; a 1998 USIA funded program on "Decentralization and Local Democracy: Citizen Empowerment in Cameroon, Mali, and Senegal"; a follow-on program for Mali and Senegal in 1999, a 1998 USIA program which brought twenty jurists from the Peoples Republic of China to the U.S., led by a member of the Supreme Peoples Court, and a 2000 program of judicial exchange for Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania.

Most important for the Partnership, were McCormack's US AID funded Partnership in Higher Education with Universite Gaston Berger de Saint Louis in northern Senegal, and the subsequent EDDI funded multi-function Community Resource Centre, the two institutions created adjacent to the Gaston Berger campus.

Another project was the Partnership in Technology and Development, The John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs University of Massachusetts Boston and Egerton University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Njoro, Kenya. A Partnership to strengthen technology and information resources at Egerton, promote local economic development initiatives in the Njoro area; improve Egerton's capacity to work with out-of-school and at-risk youth; and build a Social Sciences Computer Lab and a Cyber Café/Business. And what ensued was an expansion of the partnership between the two institutions in the form of a Regional Community Resources Centre based on the Senegal model.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO HOST COUNTRY'S ABILITY TO RESPOND TO THEIR OWN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL NEEDS

This initial university-to-university partnership, which evolved, as the African partner's capacities grow, into a local university-to-community Partnership. When realized, will represent a newly conceived, direct role for Gaston Berger's College of Law and Politics in the social and economic development of its region and nation.

This broadening of the University's role — from traditional, classroom-based, teaching into an economic and social development engine for the community — should

directly contribute to the most central EDDI goals: *The new “community outreach” staff will give a crash “immersion” course in public service, university-to-community outreach, and university-stimulated economic development.*

In order to promote greater understanding between the partners, and to encourage greater efforts in civic education and promotion of citizenship, a series of background lectures and seminars was provided covering the history of local government in the US and the challenges faced by public officials in the delivery of local services; ensuring community access to decision-making; the nature and evolution of local authority and responsibility as power has shifted from state to locality; and the proper balance between national control and local authority. We examined the different ways in which decentralization and local democracy have taken root in both advanced industrialized and developing nations. We discussed citizen participation through interest group politics, lobbying, local referenda and individual activism. We analyzed corruption, as well as fragmentation along ethnic lines. Sites visited to community development corporations and local level economic development projects were arranged. We discussed fiscal decentralization and citizen participation in the formulation of fair, viable tax policy.

Curriculum discussions were focussed on both public and private administration and management, including particular attention to information systems management and health care management. UMB has particular strengths in sociology, criminal justice, community development, social work, gerontology **and the role of women in Public Policy**. Workshops were designed to show the Gaston Berger partners how a practical, applied approach to these areas can both strengthen their on-campus offerings and have a significant impact in their surrounding communities.

While continuing to address curriculum development and other *internal* strengthening at the University of Gaston Berger, the project shifted the focus more to the *external* role that a University can play in the social and economic development of its surrounding community.

CONTINUITY

It was the clear intent of the institutions involved that this Partnership becomes an on-going, growing, affiliation. It was also clear, however, that predicting the outcome, or even the future direction, of an alliance between institutions separated by vast geographical and cultural distances, however well intentioned the participants, is an uncertain art. We did believe that the proven ability of two consortium members – UMB and University Gaston Berger – to develop their own earlier partnership and leverage it into a community outreach and development effort incorporated in an EDDI-funded Community Resource Center is undeniable evidence of the new proposed partnership’s potential.

Similarly the proven ability of the American partners to engage productively in their own local communities and then to bring those communities’ resources to the African environment is further evidence that pledges of continuity are not empty or naïve.