

# Connections



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## PAN Commonwealth

FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING

Empowerment through Knowledge and Technology

A Celebration of Ten Years of the Commonwealth of Learning

1-5 March 1999

Bandar Seri Begawan

## Virtual conferences set to begin

COL's first "virtual" conference will run from 1 - 22 October and will cover the topic, *Distance Education and Challenged Communities*. It will be moderated by Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Commonwealth of Learning.

In conjunction with next year's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, four on-line conferences have been organised to help participants and conference planners to prepare for the Forum and to provide means of participation for those who may not be able to attend in person. Please visit the Forum home page ([www.col.org/forum](http://www.col.org/forum)) for information on how to join these conferences:

- *Distance Education and Challenged Communities*, 1 - 22 October 1998, moderated by Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan
- *Library/Information Systems and Student Support*, 10 - 30 November 1998, moderated by Dr. Neela Jagannathan of Indira Gandhi National Open University and Ms. Elizabeth F. Watson of the University of the West Indies (both are head librarians)
- *Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Credit Banking*, 11 - 29 January 1999, moderated by Dr. David Woodhouse, Director of the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
- *Staff Development*, February 1999 (further details to be announced)

Each topic will be introduced by the moderator who will also present some thought-provoking questions. Participants will then be invited to join the discussion virtually. At the end of the third week, the moderator will wrap up the discussion.

A Round Table, scheduled for the first day of the Pan-Commonwealth Forum programme, will serve as an icebreaker and will include discussions on regional and



sectoral developments. Suggestions and recommendations arising from the virtual conference will be reported at these plenary sessions.

## Keynote speakers

Confirmed keynote speakers for the Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning include:

**His Excellency Chief Emeka Anyaoku**, Commonwealth Secretary-General

**The Honourable Mia Amor Mottley**, Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, Barbados

**The Right Honourable Clare Short**, Secretary of State for International Development, Britain (*via videoconference*)

**The Honourable Maurice Strong**, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General and Chairman, Earth Council

**Mr. Noah A. Samara**, Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, WorldSpace Corporation  
**Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan**, President and CEO, The Commonwealth of Learning

Plenary presenters include:

**Ms. Fay Chung**, former Chief of Education Cluster, United Nations Children Fund and former Minister of Education,

Zimbabwe (now with the Organisation of African Unity)

**Sir John Daniel**, Vice-Chancellor, The Open University, UK

**Mr. Armoogum Parsuramen**, Director, Division for the Renovation of Secondary & Vocational Education, UNESCO and former Minister of Education and Science, Mauritius

**Ms. Madeleine Woolley**, Director, Adelaide Institute of TAFE, Australia

Round tables will be chaired by:

**Dr. Abdul W. Khan**, Vice-Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University, India

**Dr. Ros Morpeth**, Director, National Extension College, UK

In celebration of ten years of The Commonwealth of Learning, the first Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning will be held next year in Brunei Darussalam. The event will be co-hosted by COL, the Brunei Darussalam Ministry of Education and Universiti Brunei Darussalam, and is being organised in collaboration with the Commonwealth's open and distance learning professional associations. It will be held at the International Convention Centre in Bandar Seri Begawan from 1 - 5 March 1999.

Further information is available on the forum web site ([www.col.org/forum](http://www.col.org/forum)) or by contacting the Forum secretariat at COL's Vancouver headquarters ([forum@col.org](mailto:forum@col.org)).

## Deadline reminders

25 September 1998—deadline for submission of abstracts for presentation at the Forum

([www.col.org/forum/call\\_abstracts.htm](http://www.col.org/forum/call_abstracts.htm))

30 September 1998—deadline for submissions and nominations for COL's Excellence in Distance Education Programme awards ([www.col.org/edep](http://www.col.org/edep)).

1 December 1998—registration deadline for Forum participants ([www.col.org/forum/reg\\_form.htm](http://www.col.org/forum/reg_form.htm)).

## Information on Brunei

The web site for further information on Brunei Darussalam (history, culture, ecology, tourist attractions and government) is at [www.brunet.bn](http://www.brunet.bn), rather than the site that was printed in the Forum brochure, which is no longer valid. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience.



## COL in Action



*Signing of the CEMCA agreement in Vancouver: COL President, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan (left) and Mr. Madan Mohan Jha, Joint Secretary, Indian Department of Education*

### CEMCA becomes international organisation

The Government of India and COL have signed an agreement that confers full international status to the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA). Under the new agreement, CEMCA will operate in India as a fully recognised international agency and be accorded the associated rights and privileges.

CEMCA was established by COL in 1995 and is hosted by the Indira Gandhi National Open University. Its objective is to promote co-operation and collaboration in the use of electronic media resources for distance education in the Asian region. CEMCA undertakes research, training and co-productions. It also maintains a database of electronic media teaching material containing details on over 9,000 audio and video programmes.

### CCDESP partners named

Agreements have now been reached with the institutions that will be COL's partners in its pilot Canada Caribbean Distance Education Scholarship Programme (CCDESP).

Recognised for their expertise in the relevant subject areas and for their success in delivering programmes "at a distance", three Canadian universities will be developing and providing undergraduate degree programmes, for three Caribbean countries, in collaboration with the University of the West Indies.

Alberta's Athabasca University will provide information technology programmes in Jamaica, Memorial University of Newfoundland will develop teacher education in Dominica and Mount Saint Vincent University will offer tourism management in St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

While the students will be taking courses and earning degrees from Canadian universities, they will be studying "at a distance" using specifically designed materials and taking advantage of modern communications and information technologies.

"We are delighted with the partnerships that we have been able to strike," said COL's President, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan. "Moreover, unlike other study-abroad schemes, this one also ensures that local institutions are involved in the arrangements. The University of the West Indies is a full partner

in the CCDESP, providing it and the Canadian institutions with opportunities for collaboration and growth. The UWI will bring its long-standing experience and immense knowledge of the region to bear upon the direction of the delivery systems in the venture".

The CCDESP is funded by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade as an innovative expansion of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP). Until now, the CSFP has provided students with scholarships that required them to study elsewhere while they earn primarily graduate degrees.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister, the Honourable Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, in his welcoming letter to the Association of Commonwealth Universities conference, held in Ottawa in August, encouraged delegates from both Canada and other Commonwealth countries to develop ideas for similar initiatives in support of new and lasting approaches to education and training. "If you accept this challenge," he wrote, "you can count on Canada once again to champion innovative education initiatives with our Commonwealth partners."

### Capturing action outdoors

Intensive research, effort to capture the unusual and unexpected, use of modern technology to save time and to improve quality, and sharing of ideas with the team are a must for a good director while filming or videotaping outdoors. This was the advice given by Mr. Siddharatha Kak, a well-known Indian television personality, in delivering the keynote address at CEMCA's workshop on "Capturing Action Outdoors." The training programme was held in Pune in June, in collaboration with the Film and Television Institute of India.

### On-line catalogue launched

COL is pleased to announce the launch of Internet access to its Information Resource Centre's on-line catalogue. With this year's complete up-grade of the library management software used by the IRC, the most noticeable improvement is a catalogue accessible to anyone with access to the web. This enhanced access will benefit those working or studying in the field of open and distance education world-wide. To search the catalogue, follow the links from COL's home page or go to: [www.col.org/irc](http://www.col.org/irc) and select the *On-Line Catalogue* option under the list of services. Inter-library loan service is also available within North America.

### TVET-Net starts up

COL is developing a section of its web site to assist people involved in the vocational training sector to keep abreast of developments around the world. The site will include links to other technical/vocational education and training (TVET) providers that deliver on-line or by other distance education methods.

Connections to other networks such as UNEVOC, will also be provided—UNEVOC is the UNESCO programme focusing on TVET

Those without access to the world wide web can participate in the COL TVET Network via fax. Please contact COL for further information or if you would like to participate in the development of the site.

### TVET teacher training

COL has been developing a core curriculum to provide teacher training by distance education in countries where an expanding technical/vocational education and training system has resulted in acquiring technically competent staff that lack teaching skills.

The learning materials for most of the 11 units have been written. However, COL would be pleased to work with institutions in member countries that would like to modify the material to make it more specifically relevant for their situation. Modules could also be developed or modified for use by enterprises that wish to use existing staff as trainers. There may also be opportunities for institutions or individuals to assist in the preparation of the learning materials for the final modules.

Further information can be obtained through COL's web site ([www.col.org/tvet](http://www.col.org/tvet))

### DE professional associations

COL continues to provide support for the establishment and development of Commonwealth open and distance education professional associations.

Recently, financial assistance enabled the Indian Distance Education Association (IDEA) to publish the proceedings of its fifth annual conference. "Sustainable Development of Distance Education: Opening the window of technology for a better future," was the theme of the conference. IDEA President, Professor Bakhshish Singh, in his opening remarks, expressed his appreciation for COL's work in developing countries.

COL's financial support has also enabled the upcoming launch of the Open and Distance Learning Association for Eastern Africa.

COL also provided assistance that allowed leaders of the Papua New Guinea Association for Distance Education to attend the annual conference of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia.



*Ugandan Honorary Consul to Vancouver, Mr. John Halani (left), presents cheque to COL President, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, providing Uganda's first direct financial contribution to COL's funding (June 1998). Staff members Professor Peter Kinyanjui (Kenya) and Ms. Kgomoiso Morlotle (Botswana) were also in attendance.*





At the meeting of the COL Board of Governors in Vancouver (September 1998), the British Columbia Ministry of Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology joined with COL to host a reception for members of the local education, business, government and diplomatic communities in honour of the Commonwealth Secretary-General. From left to right: The Hon. Paul Ramsey (BC Minister of Education), **Mr. Lewis Perinbam** (COL Senior Adviser), His Excellency Chief Emeka Anyaoku (Commonwealth Secretary-General), The Hon. Gretchen Mann Brewin (Speaker of the BC Legislature), Hon. Andrew Petter (BC Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and Minister of Intergovernmental Relations), Dr. H. Ian Macdonald (COL Chairman), Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan (COL President).

## People

### Staff news



*Brian Long*

**Mr. Brian Long** joined COL in September 1998 as Director with responsibilities for programme and staff management, resource allocation and representation to the wider community. With the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade for close to twenty years, and Director of the Department's International Academic Relations Division for the past several years, Mr. Long has been at the centre of Canada's response to international education issues. He has also been a constant and knowledgeable spokesperson on, and on behalf of, The Commonwealth of Learning.



*Patrick Julien*

**Mr. Patrick Julien** joined COL in June 1998 as Chief Operating Officer for

International Development. He is responsible for developing and implementing COL's new capability to design and deliver turnkey projects on a commercial basis for international clientele. Mr. Julien is seconded from the Canadian Department of Industry where he occupied such positions as Chief of International Development for Telecommunications and Information Technologies, Director of International Market Development and Chief Economist on media issues with the former Department of Communications.



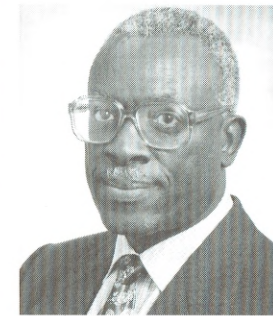
*John Bartram*

**Mr. John Bartram** took up the post of Education Specialist, Technical/Vocational Education and Training in June 1998. Mr. Bartram comes to COL from the Adelaide TAFE Institute in South Australia, where he was responsible for many international programmes, fellowships and consultancies conducted in and for the Asia-Pacific region. He also managed the Australian UNEVOC Centre located in Adelaide TAFE.

**Dr. Usha Reddi** became Director of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia in July 1998, upon the retirement of Mr. Gopal Saksena. Dr. Reddi comes to CEMCA from Osmania University (Hyderabad) where she was a Professor and Director of the University's Audio-Visual Research Centre.

**Dr. H.P. Padhy** joined the

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia in June 1998 as Programme Officer, Broadcast Media. Dr. Padhy has worked as a producer of programmes and courses, researcher, trainer and teacher in the field of audio and visual communications for several years.



*Peter Kinyanjui*

Former staff members, **Ms. Mavis Bird** and **Professor Peter Kinyanjui**, will continue to be associated with COL on a consultative basis from their respective homes in Australia and Kenya. Ms. Bird was with COL from 1991 developing technical/vocational education and training initiatives. Professor Kinyanjui was one of COL's first employees, arriving during the organisation's first year of operation in 1989. He was responsible for developing several African region and teacher education programmes during the ensuing decade. Both were recently honoured with COL's *Distinguished Service Award* for exceptional contributions to the work of The Commonwealth of Learning in pursuit of excellence in distance education for the peoples of the Commonwealth.

COL also expresses its appreciation to former CEMCA staff members, **Mr. Gopal Saksena** and **Mr. Ravi Kanth**.

## Board appointments

The Commonwealth of Learning is pleased to welcome four new members to its distinguished Board of Governors.

The Pacific Region will now be represented by **The Honourable Fiamé Naomi Mata'afa**, Minister of Education, Samoa. The other new appointments represent three of the six governments designated as COL's "major donors":

**Ms. Shona Butterfield**, Chief Executive of The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, for the Government of New Zealand.

**Ms. Robin Ciceri**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Post Secondary Education Division, British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, for the Government of the Province of British Columbia (Canada).

**Dr. Glenn Crombie**, President Emeritus, Cambrian College (Ontario), for the Government of Canada.

Sincere thanks are also extended to retiring Board members, **The Honourable Iona Campagnolo** (Canada), **Mr. Shell Harvey** (British Columbia) and **The Honourable Dr. S. Langi Kavaliku** (Pacific Region, Tonga), each for their several years of dedicated service to COL and the Commonwealth. A complete list of current Board members is always available on COL's web site.



## Events

### Reddy Memorial Lecture

Professor N.R. Arthenayake, Vice-Chancellor of the Open University of Sri Lanka, delivered the 3rd annual *Professor G. Ram Reddy Memorial Lecture* on 2 July 1998. His topic was, "A Profile of a 21st Century Distance Teacher—A developing world paradigm."

The lecture was televised in 40 countries through Indian Television's International Channel, and made available to television and educational broadcasters throughout the world via satellite. Simultaneous audiences also gathered at IGNOU regional centres, state open universities, Allama Iqbal Open University (Pakistan), the Bangladesh Open University, the Open University of Sri Lanka and at distance education institutes in Nepal and Maldives.

The event is jointly sponsored by the Indira Gandhi National Open University and COL in memory of the late Professor Ram Reddy, who was the first Vice-Chancellor of IGNOU and the first Vice-President of COL.

### Guyana proposes national DE strategy

A National Conference on Distance Education, held in Guyana in June, resulted in the forming of a task force that will develop a national policy document to outline a co-ordinated distance education strategy for the country for presentation to the Minister of Education.

The conference was organised by the University of Guyana (UG) and the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Youth Programme, the Cyril Potter College of Education and the National Centre for Education Resource Development.

COL's Caribbean Regional Adviser to the President (and former UG Vice-Chancellor), Dr. Dennis Irvine, and Senior Training Specialist, Ms. Patricia McWilliams, facilitated the conference discussions.

The British Department for International Development's continuing support in the development of foundation level distance education for teachers in Guyana will also be of assistance in the formulation of national policies.

### Post-ACU "Think-Tank"

Following last month's Quinquennial General Conference of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Ottawa, Canada), a three-day "Vice-Chancellors' Think Tank" was convened by COL in partnership with the ACU and York University in Toronto.

Within the theme of *Technological Change: Impacts on distance learning and off-campus education*, three presentations were given on "Management and Leadership," "Learning and Teaching Systems" and "Learning Support Services"—by Dr. Ross

Paul, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Windsor; Dr. Louis Moran, Flexible Learning Consultant; and Professor David Sewart, Director of Student Services, UK Open University, respectively.

Dr. Geraldine Kenney-Wallace, Managing Director and Vice-Chancellor of British Aerospace Virtual University, gave a keynote presentation on "Technology Change and the Learning Imperative: The Virtual University as a strategy for 21st century". She shared with participants the innovative implementation of an industry-based virtual institution.

The symposium was attended by 20 vice-chancellors and two registrars, representing 14 different countries and all Commonwealth regions. Participants expressed the usefulness of such a small group discussion focusing on a current theme of common concerns. COL will plan to hold similar workshops in the future in order to continue to provide a forum for academic leaders to share experiences of dealing with issues confronting higher education as universities move into the new millennium.

### Caribbean delegates attend CADE

COL sponsored participation by six educators from the Caribbean at the Canadian Association for Distance Education annual conference, held in Banff in May 1998.

The theme of the conference was "Partnerships in Learning" and in support of this theme, COL convened a panel discussion entitled *The Challenges of Effectively Using Distance Education in Small Communities*. Three of the visitors from the Caribbean took part in the panel, along with Ms. Erin Keough from the Open Learning & Information Network in Newfoundland, and Mr. David Walker and Mr. Greg Zador, of COL's staff. COL's President, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, chaired the panel discussion.

The Caribbean participants were: Mr. George Callender (Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, Barbados), Ms. Cynthia Thompson (Belize Teachers' College), Mr. Wesley Barrett (Ministry of Education and Culture, Jamaica), Mr. Madison Stanislaus (Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, St. Lucia), Mr. Macaulay Peters (Ministry of Education, Culture and Women's Affairs, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) and Ms. Marcia Riley (Ministry of Education, Trinidad & Tobago).

### COL President addresses key UNESCO conference

Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan was one of the keynote speakers at the UNESCO-UNEVOC Conference on Vocational Education in the Asia-Pacific Region in the 21st Century, held earlier this year in Australia. Hosted by the Adelaide TAFE UNEVOC Centre, the conference was attended by 100 delegates representing vocational education and training from throughout Australia, and international delegates from 42 different countries.

Professor Dhanarajan's topic was "Delivery of Training Programmes: Changing Design." He spoke about the huge needs for education and training, the resources that were available to start to address those needs and more crucially, the available technology. "What is needed," he said, "is the vision to make them a reality."

## New Canadian policy institute

The Canadian Association for Distance Education (CADE) and British Columbia's Open Learning Agency have joined forces to create the new Institute for Distance and Distributed Education Advancement (IDEA). The Institute will provide input and respond to provincial, national, and international policy initiatives involving distance education and emerging distributed learning systems. IDEA promises to be a voice for the distance education sector and ensure that key issues of importance to distance educators, such as learner access to quality education, standards related to applications of new technology, and reliable student services, are represented in Canadian and provincial government policy research and development. Further information is available on the Institute's web site ([www.ola.bc.ca/idea\\_iped](http://www.ola.bc.ca/idea_iped)).

## Connections

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York University, Canada

President & CEO:  
Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan

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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 by visiting our World Wide Web site.

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