

GEIFON's Executive Director Hosts International Students

The Executive Director of GEIFON, Professor A. B. Ebeigbe recently coordinated a 10 – week **Study Abroad Research Programme** at the University of Benin, from June to August, 2006. The four (4) students from the USA, who participated in the programme are: Jacquena Manahan (Hampton University, Virginia), Olubukola Kalejaiye (Hampton University, Virginia), Anthony Muiro (U.C Berkeley) and Keniesha (Howard University, D.C). This students' research programme is in furtherance of an existing partnership between Howard University and UNIBEN and a new collaboration with Hampton University.

The Hampton programme was developed by Professor Isai Urasa, and funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) of the USA. It provides opportunity for students to gain research experiences in different cultural settings. The UNIBEN–HAMPTON programme is an addition to two (2) existing research sites elsewhere in Africa (Tanzania and Kenya). The emphasis at the UNIBEN site is on **Natural Products Research**. The students carried out their studies in four UNIBEN laboratories, as follows:

S/No	Name of Students	Laboratory	Title of Research	Supervisor
1	Anthony Muiro	Pharmaceutical Chemistry	Evaluation of the phytochemical properties of the plant (<i>Pyrenacantha staudti</i>)	Prof. C.O. Usifoh
2	Olubukola Kalejaiye	Physiology	Characterization of mechanism of action of medicinal plant extract (<i>Pyrenacantha staudti</i>) on isolated rat aortic smooth muscle	Prof. A.B. Ebeigbe
3	Jacquena Manahan	Pharmacology	In-vivo effect of plant extract (<i>Pyrenacantha staudti</i>) on blood pressure and heart rate of Rabbits	Dr. E.K.I. Omogbai
4	Keniesha O. Thompson	Biochemistry	Studies on the Cytoprotective properties of <i>Scoparia dulcis</i> on experimental carbon tetrachloride toxicity in rats	Jerry Orhue

Studies in Professor Usifoh's laboratory involved the collection and preparation of the plant materials, the extraction and purification processes and identification of components. Students were exposed to general principles involved in medicinal plants' research. Studies in the other three laboratories exposed the students to biochemical and pharmacological methods for the characterization of the cardiovascular action of plant extracts, using both *in vivo* and *in vitro* methods.

The students also participated in lectures/tutorials in selected specialized topics relevant to the research areas. Areas covered include:

- Basic Autonomic Physiology/Pharmacology (Prof. Ebeigbe)
- Phytochemistry and Spectroscopic analyses (Prof. Usifoh)
- Basic Principles of drug action (Prof. Omogbai)
- Regulation of smooth muscle function and laboratory methods. (Dr. Ray Ozolua)

The students also had the opportunity to interact with the under-listed graduate students working in the designated laboratories: **Ifedayo A. Ajayi, Emeka Nwokocha, A. Falodun, and Fabian Amaechina** and were specially received by **Professor L.F.O. Obika**, Dean of the School of Basic Medical Sciences, who chaired their two seminar presentations.

At the completion of the studies, each student gave a 15-minute oral presentation of their project at a Faculty seminar attended by Professors, undergraduate and graduate students.

The US professors who accompanied the students are:

- Professor Isai Urasa (Professor of Chemistry and Chairman, MHIRT program Director)
- Professor Godson Nwokogu
- Professor Alaba Ogunbadeniya and
- Professor Broderick Eribo (Howard University)

Continuation of this programme is very well assured. The University of Benin administration is particularly committed to its success, as evidenced by the Vice Chancellor's warm reception and a farewell dinner party for the visiting students.

Socio-Cultural Experience:

The visiting students were accommodated at the University of Benin Guest Houses, where they had the opportunity to interact with members of the university community; particularly, other Nigerian students. The students also had a taste of the rich Benin traditional culture and were particularly thrilled by the Bronze and Wood crafts at the famous Igun Street Market in Benin City. Other tour sites visited included the commercial City, Lagos and the Federal Capital, Abuja. They particularly relished the favourite Nigerian "pepper-soup" with "star" beer or "Gordon's Spark" at the University's senior staff club!

Vice Chancellor's Farewell:

In recognition of the positive impact of the international research partnership, UNIBEN's Vice Chancellor, Professor E.A.C. Nwanze, hosted a farewell dinner in honour of the visitors and pledged further support for future students' summer research activities.

Professor A.B. Ebeigbe,
Coordinator

PHOTOS



Visiting International Students from Hampton University, USA, on a summer research programme at UNIBEN (June – August, 2006). Programme was coordinated by Professor A.B. Ebeigbe. *Left to Right:* Anthony Muiru; Jacquena Manahan; Buki Kalejaiye and Dr. Alaba Ogunbadeniye (accompanying Professor from Hampton University).



Farewell dinner (on August 9, 2006) hosted by the Vice Chancellor, University of Benin, Professor E.A.C. Nwanze (1), in honour of the visiting international students (2, 8, 9) from Hampton University, USA, on completion of a 10-week research programme at UNIBEN: Jacqueena Manahan (2); Prof. A.B. Ebeigbe (3); Prof. C. Usifoh (4); Prof. E.K.I. Omogbai (5) Dr. Ray Ozolua (6); Ifedayo Ajayi (7); Buki Kalejaiye (8); Anthony Muiru (9); Dr. Alaba Ogunbadeni (10) and Philo Adozi (11).



Un-winding, after a hard day's work! *Left to Right:* Jacquena Manahan, Buki Kalejaiye, Isai Urasa, Toni Ebeigbe and Tony Muiru.



Un-winding, after a hard day's work! *Left to Right:* Kaniesha Thompson (HOWARD), Buki Kalejaiye, Jacqueena Manahan, and Isai Urasa.