

## Newsletter

First of all, we want 2021 to be better than 2020. Indeed, the health crisis has strongly marked USF-AWB by the virtual absence of missions outside France, and by numerous videoconferences to develop ongoing projects.

In this issue, you will read the report of the mission of our colleague Dr. Didier Caucau in information technology at the Nazi Boni University de Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina-Faso, with which the collaboration lasts for several years. Moreover, the President of this university has sent us a certificate of recognition, for which we thank him warmly. Then are presented the start of a collaboration in biological sciences in Ivory Coast, and in management for the National Institute of Management Sciences of Libreville (Gabon).

Finally, we are looking for collaborators specialized in climate change and sustainable development for Honduras.

Wishing good reading. ■

Prof. Robert Laurini, president of USF-AWB.

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### **Mission report to the Nazi Boni University (Burkina-Faso) by Dr Didier Caucau**

This mission took place from 3 to 22 December 2020 under the aegis of USF-AWB, thanks in particular to Dr Xavier Alphaize and Dr Robert Laurini, who supported me, and to Antoine Bricout for the takeover of the plane ticket by the French Embassy in Ouagadougou. I would also like to thank the UNB authorities for facilitating my visit, and in particular Boureima Sangaré, the head of the math department, which organized my stay very well and always worked for the smooth running of this mission.

This teaching and research mission has been well-engaged. I taught 10 hours a day (Saturday included but not on Sunday) from 7 am to noon for twenty Master students, and from 1 pm to 6 pm for fifty Bachelor students. Fortunately, there were moments of respite to meet briefly with UNB personalities. In

addition, I was able to present two research papers at their seminar as well as collaborate with members of LAMDI (Discrete Mathematics Laboratory).



This mission was intense, but it went very well. It was made pleasant thanks to the hospitality and hospitality of the UNB staff, the motivation and kindness of the students, and the accommodation at the university's guest house. This mission made it possible to understand the major needs to enable students to learn in good conditions.

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First of all, there are very few computers available to students. UNB is spread over four sites. On the INSSA (Institute of Health Sciences) site where I was, there is no computer. On the site of Nasso (name of the village about ten kilometers away from the other three sites), there are only about ten computers left, knowing that the computer room was ravaged by termites. Site 22 (neighborhood number) will be open soon and has no engine room. Finally, on the CFR website, there is a room of about forty computers offered by the national lottery; this room will soon be available at UNB trainings. This virtual absence of computers means that faculty students do not do practical work on computers because about half of them cannot afford them. In addition, there is a lack of computer teachers. Also, it is deplorable that students in mathematics and information technologies do not have the basics in algorithmics and programming. To remedy this shortage of computers, we are in the process of sending computers (out of the French administration) by French universities and higher schools.

A second major problem concerns the duration of studies. To obtain a bachelor's degree or master's degree, students need a minimum of five years of study.

The root cause is not a lack of teachers but rather a lack of availability. Students must then acquire financial autonomy mainly by giving courses in high schools. They can no longer follow their courses regularly at university and many of them end up dropping out. I do not think a virtual university is a cure for this problem, because the recent confinements in our universities have clearly shown that distance learning, at least in computer science, is really not working.

In research, doctoral and post-doctoral students are too isolated. For financial reasons, they are generally unable to present their work at international conferences. This prevents them from really making themselves known and it becomes very difficult to be taken in post-doc. They have little or no external collaboration at all.

To conclude, this mission allowed students from this university to get courses in computer science as they were given in a French university. It should also allow the sending of computers and initiate collaborations. Such a mission should be continued if we want to be able to significantly help UNB in continuity, especially in IT.

For more details, contact the Professor Didier Caucau <Didier.Caucau@univ-mlv.fr>. ■

### **Attestation of recognition of the actions of Academics Without Borders at the Nazi Boni University of Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina-Faso**

We have received the following letter, the contents of which are as follows.

*"I, Professor Macaire OUEDRAOGO, President of the NAZI BONI University in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, would like to underline my very positive appreciation of the collaboration between our university and Academics Without Borders (USF-AWB). This cooperation, put in place since November 13, 2014, contributes to strengthening the capacity of our university in the fields of teaching and research.*



*USF-AWB experts accompany the professors of our university in the design of courses and the transfer of competences, and therefore the training of national trainers. This is the case in the fields of Mathematics, Computer Science and Civil Engineering, disciplines in which academics are lacking.*

*This collaboration has achieved several objectives:*

- Several courses in Mathematics, Computer Science and Civil Engineering have been taught over the past six years with the support of USF-AWB. We believe that this program is very important to our university: it has enabled us to achieve our training objectives in several undergraduate and master's degrees.*
- As part of these courses supported by USF-AWB with the collaboration of Burkinabe teachers, they have benefited from quality training, helping to expand their skills. These trainings of trainers have been very beneficial for our university, especially in several specializations in Civil Engineering.*

*A large bibliography in various fields has been made available to the teachers from our university to fill the lack of bibliographic resources. The encouraging results obtained in the framework of our cooperation with USF-AWB and the sustainability of this collaboration must be continued. The following points could be considered and developed:*

- *We would like to see the continuation and strengthening of the teaching missions and, if possible, the extension of this partnership to other disciplines,*
- *We would like to see a scientific collaboration that will enable UNB students to continue their master's and PhD studies with the collaboration of experienced and qualified French academics,*
- *We want to strengthen the involvement of USF-AWB in our doctoral training in order to increase the number of teachers in Mathematics and Civil Engineering in our university."*

*Prof. Macaire S. OUEDRAOGO, President of the NAZI BONI University in Bobo Dioulasso. ■*

### **Start of collaboration with UPGC University of Ivory Coast in Biological Sciences**

After a first contact in spring 2020 and the signing of a convention the following summer, the faculty of Biological Sciences of the Peleforo Gon Coulibaly University (UPGC) of Korhogo, Ivory Coast, and USF-AWB are preparing together the first joint actions. Based on the priority action plan established in the autumn by the faculty, they aim to increase research skills and diversify training provision.



To this end, the project places particular emphasis on strengthening the training of young researchers and professors of the faculty in the fields of teaching (distance education) and research (research methodology, writing of scientific papers), based on individual or collective tutorials by

USF-AWB stakeholders, complementing and supporting experienced UPGC researchers and research teachers.

External expertise will also be proposed for the optimization of the organization of faculty teams around research topics. Finally, USF-AWB speakers will participate in specific courses offered to students in scientific fields that complement the current training offer. The project is expected to start in the first quarter of 2021.

For further information, please contact Dr. Lydie Ploux <ploux@unistra.fr>. ■

### **Setting up of courses for the National Institute of Management Sciences of Libreville, Gabon, on the strategic management of information**

The aim was to set up a 20-hour course for the master's degree in Accounting, Control and Audit at this higher school.



The objective of this course is to understand information systems in their strategic dimension, approach and achievements:

- A new approach to managing information systems: issues, missions, competencies, responsibilities,
- Alignment of information technology with strategy and profitability
- Information system infrastructure as a strategic decision (standardization, rationalization, outsourcing, extended enterprise concept).

For further information, please contact Professor André Tiran, <andre.tiran@univ-lyon2.fr>. ■

### **Looking for collaborators in Climate change and sustainable development for Honduras**

A university in this country has recently contacted us to set up webinar-type training in

these areas with the help of the Cooperation and Cultural Action Services of the French Embassy for Central America. We are looking for collaborators on the legal, organizational and technological aspects as well.



For further information, please contact Prof. Robert Laurini <[Robert.Laurini@usf-awb.org](mailto:Robert.Laurini@usf-awb.org)>. ■

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