

## Newsletter

Dear colleagues,

A new era begins for Universitaires Sans Frontières/Academics Without Borders!

After 12 years of USF-AWB presidency, I wanted to pass the hand. Finally was elected Dr. Jean Ruffier, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Lyon to whom we wish good luck. Personally, I will continue to deal mainly with the newsletter currently written in three languages, French with 5593 recipients, English 2388 and Spanish 1815.

It will include a presentation by the new president, then of several ongoing activities, a mission in management in Gabon, computer courses in Burkina Faso, internships for political science students in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, a seminar in Algeria on the drafting of PhD's and a dossier for the design of a master's degree in precision agriculture for Cameroon.

Wishing a good reading and transmission of this newsletter to anyone potentially interested.

Prof. Robert Laurini, Editor of the USF-AWB Newsletter. ■

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### **Presentation by Professor Jean Ruffier, new president of USF**

USF's board of regents elected me president. I am very honored by this decision, although I have the feeling that many of the former members would have been more legitimate than me, who have only been in the association for less than three years. My conviction is that we had to develop our action in new horizons and especially in Latin America.

With its twelve years of existence, USF, thanks essentially to the action of its oldest members, has acquired greater scope. The association operating mainly in Africa, is taking its first steps in Latin America. It had received real support from the French authorities. Our ambition is to accumulate sufficient means of our own so that we can act without outside help, if we so choose. Our philosophy doesn't change. We don't offer a free service. We ask



for the implementation of the organizations we support. But that doesn't make us a business organization. We want to increase the capacity of universities and research centers in disadvantaged regions to integrate fully into the world of research and university education.

Perhaps I should introduce myself briefly. I was a senior researcher at CNRS, become a late, university professor in sociology and industry management. I spent a large part of my professional life observing the factories. He was trying to find improvements that were acceptable to all interested parties in these factories. This required observations, studies and extensive exchanges with my fellow researchers, with those responsible, with the employees of their factories and also with the industrial authorities of the countries concerned. I have worked mainly in Europe, Latin America and China. I have led multinational teams and research centers (Argentina and China). I have also animated a network of researchers that has acted as the main, albeit informal, laboratory for some fifteen researchers from the three continents for some twenty years.

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Like my colleagues at USF, I try to share my experience. We're helpful. We contribute to a more just, more developed, more caring world. There is no lack of work or enthusiasm to carry it out.

For further information, contact Professor Jean Ruffier <Jean.ruffier@usf-awb.net>. ■

### **Mission report to the National Institute of Management Sciences (INSG) in Libreville by Professor Pierre-Antoine SPRIMONT, University of Rouen**

Academics Without Borders was assigned to a pedagogical audit mission at the National Institute of Management Sciences (INSG) in Libreville, Gabon. The INSG wants to rethink its teachings and actions to be closer to companies and in tune with the expectations of the economic fabric. The mission was entrusted to Dr. Pierre-Antoine Sprimont, professor at the Universities of Management Sciences at the IAE in Rouen, France.



For a month, Pierre-Antoine took stock of the situation through exchanges with the teaching staff of the INSG and representatives of the Gabonese economic world. Based on this assessment, a series of proposals were formulated to the school management. In general, the INSG is advised to position itself on entrepreneurship in the agribusiness, tourism and digital transformation sectors. It is proposed to strengthen the notoriety of the Marketing and CCA (Accounting Control Audit) masters of the INSG by requesting a double quality accreditation (HCERES-CAMES). It is also necessary to organize management training seminars for graduates of other specialties (e.g., economics).

As such, Pierre-Antoine gave a two-day training in data analysis applied to management sciences and business expectations.

On the basis of this assessment, proposals have been made to the school management and a detailed action plan will now be proposed to the INSG to implement all these proposals.

For any information, contact Professor Pierre-Antoine SPRIMONT, Professor at the University of Rouen, France, <pierreantoine.sprimont@univ-rouen.fr>. ■

### **CIMPA mission to Burkina Faso**

It was a teaching and research mission that took place from 4 January to 27 January 2022 at the Nazi Boni University (UNB) in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. It has allowed to give 86 hours of training courses in mathematics and computer science to students at Master and Bachelor level. These teachings focused on finite automata, automatic sequences, and finite graph theory.

The atmosphere was pleasant with a good turnout. However, I was surprised and amused by the students' slowness to take notes.



This mission has generally worked well but has been disrupted by two important events. The first «disturbing» event was the general strike of the UNB students so that the bachelor's degrees in science could be made in 3 years instead of 5, and that the masters could be made in 2 years instead of a minimum of 5 years. The second day of the strike ended with live ammunition being fired at students (no number of injuries reported).

For further information, please contact Professor Didier Caucau <didier.caucau@univ-mlv.fr>. ■

### **Internships at the Office of the IUA United Nations Coordinator for Students**

Following the seminar organized in January 2022 by USF at the University Institute of Abidjan (IUA) on the aid mechanisms of UN agencies in the Ivory Coast, the United Nations System Coordinator received a delegation of students from this Institute accompanied by the Rector. Six of those master's students from the Department of

Applied Social Sciences will benefit from an internship with the United Nations system in Ivory Coast.



For further information, please contact Professor Xavier Alphaize <xavier.alphaize@usf-awb.net>. ■

### Seminar on thesis writing at a Saharan university

Hamma Lakhdar University in El Oued is located in the Algerian Sahara, not far from the Tunisian border. In a difficult context, this new university seeks to develop and, above all, enhance research. In this context, it organized an international conference last January on artificial intelligence and its applications (AIAP). Due to the Covid-19, it was developed in online mode.

In Algeria, doctoral students are often under-supervised and subject to excessive pressure: in order to defend a doctoral thesis, it is mandatory to publish in a limited number of scientific journals (A-range), task often too difficult for novice researchers who do not master the editorial codes and who are puzzled by this objective. For this reason, Professor Robert Laurini was invited to give a seminar on thesis writing, as a follow-up to the work on this topic<sup>2</sup>.



For further information, please contact Professor Robert Laurini <robert.laurini@usf-awb.org>. ■

<sup>2</sup> "How to Prepare a Successful Master's or Doctoral Thesis in France, Guide for International Students", by Y.F. Livian and R. Laurini, Campus Ouvert Editions, January 2019.

### Design of a Master program in precision farming in Cameroon

A Cameroonian institution, the African Higher Institute of Information and Knowledge Technologies (ISATIC), has asked USF-AWB to help in the design of precision farming training. Our aid has made it possible to present a dossier in this innovative direction which corresponds to a strong need in many African countries.

Remember that precision farming is a management approach that focuses on (near real-time) observation, measurement, and responses to variability in crops, fields and animals. It can help increase crop yields and animal performance, reduce costs, including labor costs, and optimize process inputs. At the same time, precision farming can increase work safety and reduce the environmental impacts of agriculture and farming practices, thus contributing to the sustainability of agricultural production.



For further information, please contact the ISATIC address <institut.isatic@gmail.com> ■