# REPORT ON STUDY & TRAVEL ABROAD GRANT

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<th><strong>Prepared for:</strong></th>
<th>The Faculty &amp; Staff Travel and Study Abroad Grant Fund Committee, Faculty of International Education</th>
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<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>7th January 2013</td>
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<td><strong>Project</strong></td>
<td>Vancouver Island University (VIU) and the Catholic University College Ghana (CUCG), Fiapre-Sunya, Partnership for Nursing Education &amp; Scholarship: Strengthening Health Systems Globally to Reduce Child Mortality and Improve Maternal Health</td>
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Catholic University College Ghana, Fiapre-Sunya
# Table of Contents

1. Details of Travel Itinerary

2. Overview of Project

3. Learning Outcomes

4. Weekly Itinerary and summary of how objectives were accomplished
   - Week I
   - Lessons learned
   - Week II
   - Lessons learned
   - Week III
   - Lessons learned
   - Week IV
   - Lessons learned
   - Week V
   - Lessons learned
   - Week VI
   - Lessons learned

5. Next Steps & Recommendations

6. Appendices
   - Appendix A...Contact List
**Details of Travel Itinerary**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Employment Affiliation/Tenure</strong></td>
<td>Regular, Full-time employee, Vancouver Island University Faculty Association (VIUFA)</td>
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<td><strong>Travel Dates</strong></td>
<td>October 6 to November 22, 2012 (48 days)</td>
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<td><strong>Flight Path</strong></td>
<td>Vancouver (YVR) to Heathrow Airport, London</td>
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<td>London to Accra, Ghana and</td>
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<td>Accra to Sunyani, Brong Ahafo Region, Ghana (return)</td>
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<td><strong>Accommodation in Sunyani</strong></td>
<td>South Ridge Guest House (north Sunyani)</td>
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I would like to gratefully acknowledge the encouragement and financial support I received for this project at VIU from the Faculty & Staff Travel and Study Abroad Grant Fund Committee, VIU Faculty Association, International Education administration and staff, the Faculty of Education, the Department of Recreation and Tourism Management, and Faculty of Health & Human Services administration, faculty, staff and students. The grant of $2,000 from the Faculty & Staff Travel and Study Abroad Grant Fund Committee is greatly appreciated and it helped significantly with covering my travel expenses to Ghana (October/November 2012).
The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Association of Community Colleges in Canada (ACCC) funded the five-year Ghana Canada Project for Environmental Education (GCPEEE) from 2006 to 2011. The project involved a collaboration between faculty, staff and students at Vancouver Island University (VIU) (Tourism & Recreation, Health & Human Services, Global Studies, Forestry) and two partner colleges in Sunyani, Western Ghana: the Sunyani Polytechnic, the Sunyani Faculty of Forest Resource Technology (FFRT). As a member of the GCPEE, I felt very privileged to be able to collaborate on this project and travel to Sunyani, Ghana, in 2008, 2009, and 2010, with different groups of interdisciplinary students, staff, faculty and members of Rotary International. During these visits, I had the opportunity to collaborate with both Ghanaian and Canadian students and faculty, as well as Ghanaian community members on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of knowledge extension poverty reduction and health promotion strategies such as HIV/AIDS prevention, waste management, water safety and hand-washing. Partnering on these initiatives enabled me to network with Ghanaians in the health and education fields and learn about some of the strengths in the community as well as challenges to health.

In 2008, while working on these initiatives, I met Dr. Kofi Barimah, Dean of the Public Health and Allied Sciences (PHAS) Faculty at the Catholic University College of Ghana (CUG). This university-college is affiliated with the University of Ghana, Legon, and the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. CUG is located in Fiapre, outside Sunyani, the capital city of the Brong Ahafo Region, Western Ghana. At our initial meeting, Dr. Barimah expressed concern about the dire shortage of health care workers in Ghana and explained that he and his colleagues at CUG were working together to plan and implement the first Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program for the Brong Ahafo Region. Dr. Barimah explained about the need to educate more undergraduate and graduate nurses, not only to enhance the health care delivery system, but also ensure qualified nurse educators for teaching these programs. In addition, Dr. Barimah and his colleagues envisioned that BSN prepared nurses would have the educational preparation to more effectively reduce child mortality rates and improve maternal health - Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – and improve the health of all Ghanaians.

In 2009, discussions between faculty and administration at VIU and CUG progressed to the development of an agreement of international cooperation that signified the wishes of both academic institutions to develop a mutually beneficial reciprocal “sister school” relationship. The agreement represented a commitment by both institutions to promote common goals, strengthen academic interactions, and strive for a better understanding of each other’s cultures, values and beliefs. Objectives from this agreement are continuing to strengthen relationships and include:

- Promoting international education opportunities for students, staff, faculty and administration on concepts related to intercultural effectiveness
Facilitating faculty and student exchanges for credit and non-credit activity, research, or short-term instruction

Encouraging joint consultation on program design, course curriculum, administrative systems, and other areas of mutual interest

Providing opportunities to undertake cooperative ventures on specific education projects, collaborative research, and analysis on matters of mutual interest

To create amongst faculty, staff, students, and administration, at both institutions, an awareness that we live in a global community and our professionalism can be deepened with increased cultural insights.

In 2010-2012, further discussions led to the joint consultation between both institutions on the development of a BSN degree program - with a major or specialty focus on maternal-child health - at CUG, in Fiapre-Sunya. These discussions focused on the development of a CIDA grant proposal to address the dire shortage of degree nurses in Ghana by creating more opportunities for nursing education, especially in the Brong Ahafo Region, where there are currently no nursing baccalaureate degree programs available. Having more nurses with a maternal-child health specialty was also recognized as being key to tackling the MDGs of reducing child mortality rates and improving maternal health. In 2011-2012, Dr. Barimah came to Canada for a sabbatical year as a Visiting Associate Professor at the Faculty of Science, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario. Members of VIU’s International Development Week Committee took this opportunity to invite Dr. Barimah to come to VIU and be a distinguished speaker during International Development Week (IDW) in February 2012. Dr. Barimah accepted the invitation to IDW and engaged in many events on campus such as presenting his research work on Immigrants’ use of Traditional Medicines, visiting classrooms, and advising on a Global Health course at VIU. My family and I also hosted Dr. Barimah’s home stay while he was visiting Nanaimo and we had many discussions about the strengths and challenges of health and education in Ghana. Having Dr. Barimah on campus was also a great opportunity to strengthen relationships between both institutions and faculty in International Education and the BSN program continued joint consultations on the CIDA proposal for funding of a BSN program at CUG, in Fiapre-Sunya. During these meetings a number of key questions were raised that were seen as integral to successful outcomes for an application for CIDA funding. For example:

- What processes, policies, and procedures were in place in Ghana for the accreditation of new BSN degree programs?
- What role did the Ghana Ministries of Education and Health play in the accreditation of new BSN programs?
- What role did the Ghana Nurses and Midwives Council play in the accreditation of new BSN programs? For example, what were the requirements for accreditation around nursing curricula
design, educational level and preparation of faculty, staff, mentors, competencies for practice, and design of a nursing laboratory?

- What level of support was there for a new BSN program amongst the Public Health and Allied Sciences (PHAS) faculty, administration, and students at CUG?

- What level of support was there for a new BSN program amongst key stakeholders in the health care system in the Brong Ahafo Region especially with regards to the provision of suitable practica for nursing students?

- What level of support existed amongst local Chiefs and Tribal Councils for nursing students to engage in service-learning community development opportunities that had the potential to promote maternal and child health in the local communities?

These questions as well as other questions related to global health, global-mindedness, inter-cultural effectiveness, gender equity, and the determinants of maternal and child health, were uppermost in my mind. I saw the need for further experiential education and the need to dedicate time to coming to know the Fiapre-Sunyani community as well as infrastructures for health and education locally, regionally, and nationally in Ghana. As I teach two courses – theory and practice- on the Promotion of Community and Societal Health, I recognized this unique opportunity for collaborating with our Ghanaian partners on a project that would not only strengthen relationships between both institutions, but also provide me with the opportunity for professional development and enhance my abilities to facilitate teaching and learning with students at VIU. I was very excited to have the opportunity to actively participate in community development work, increase my knowledge and understanding of global health issues and broaden my learning about cross-cultural strategies for facilitating teaching and learning with nursing students. I also envisioned that the strengthening of the partnership would open the door to scholarly activities such as curriculum development, and professional development initiatives for faculty/staff/students, as well as collaboration on research projects.

In February 2012, my request for a half year assisted leave of absence was approved by the VIUFA Leave Committee (July to December 2012) to focus on further developing the CIDA proposal in collaboration with our Ghanaian partners and dedicate time to my own professional development related to community and societal health.

In May 2012, I received a letter of invitation from Professor James Ephraim, Vice Chancellor, Catholic University College of Ghana, to visit CUG in Fiapre-Sunyani and assist in the preparation of proposals for funding towards mounting their BSN program and further strengthening mutually beneficial reciprocal relationships between both institutions.

Before travelling to Ghana, I had a meeting with Meg Savory, International Projects and Grants Coordinator, International Education VIU, and this was very helpful in identifying the key outcomes for my planned visit to CUG, Fiapre-Sunyani, Ghana.
This report outlines these key outcomes. It also describes how the key outcomes were met through engaging in diverse learning experiences. Finally, it outlines strategies to take forward and recommendations for next steps for building capacity and strengthening partnerships with CUG and partners in Fiapre-Sunyani, Ghana.
Key Outcomes for Travel to Ghana (October-November 2012).

1. Strengthening of reciprocal relationships between VIU and CUG and continuing joint consultation on the project to assist with CIDA funding of a new CUG BSN program in Fiapre-Sunyani,

2. Building on partnerships to strengthen the quality and capacity of CUG as a nursing education institution, increase the number of highly skilled maternal-child health nurses, and support innovative service-learning community development strategies to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health in Ghana,

3. Identify, clarify, and document the processes, policies, and procedures in place in Ghana for the accreditation of new BSN degree programs,

4. Identify, clarify, and document the role of the Ghana Ministries of Education and Health in the accreditation of new BSN programs in the Brong Ahafo Region,

5. Identify, verify, and document the role of the Ghana Nurses and Midwives Council in the accreditation of new BSN programs, especially with regard to the requirements for nursing curricula design; educational level and preparation of faculty, staff, mentors; competencies for practice; and the design and management of a nursing laboratory,

6. Identify, verify, and document the level of existing support for a new BSN program amongst CUG’s administration, and the Public Health and Allied Sciences (PHAS) faculty, administration, and students at CUG. For example, is there sufficient classroom space allocated for the BSN program? Is there a suitable space for a nursing laboratory? Are there adequate numbers of qualified faculty to lead and teach the BSN program? Is there adequate student residence accommodation?

7. Identify, verify, and document the level of support for a new BSN program amongst key stakeholders in the health care system in the Brong Ahafo Region especially with regards to the provision of suitable practica for nursing students,

8. Identify, verify, and document the level of support amongst local Chiefs and Tribal Councils for nursing students to engage in service-learning community development opportunities that had the potential to promote maternal and child health in the local communities.

9. Identify and document the members of the BSN Committee as well as key stakeholders in the community [contact list].
My first weekend in Ghana was spent at the Gillbt Guest House, in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. There I met with Amanda Moore and Brianne Labute, VIU alumni who are now living and working with non-governmental Ghanaian organizations dedicated to addressing the many forms of human trafficking, for sexual exploitation and other reasons, as well as the prevention of violence against women. The weekend I arrived also coincided with the Canadian Thanksgiving holiday and I was invited to a pot-luck multicultural dinner hosted by Amanda and Brianne. This was a wonderful opportunity to network and meet with Ghanaians, Canadians, and people of other nationalities who are living and working in Ghana on health related projects. For instance, I met with a Canadian woman who had completed her Masters in Public Health in London, England, and was working on Malaria prevention research initiatives with a pharmaceutical company in Accra. I was also able to learn about the Enslavement Prevention Alliance – West Africa (EPAWA) organization from discussions with Amanda and Brianne on their work rescuing children who were trafficked, their experiences with victim support work, and experiences dealing with the justice system and trying to prosecute the perpetrators of violence against women and children. I learned how Human Traffickers often bring victims to hospitals for treatments and the significant roles that nurses and other health care workers can play in combating human trafficking and victim support. I also had the pleasure of renewing acquaintances with Mariette and Moses, directors of Hanukkah Children’s Home in Sunyani, who were also staying at Gillbt Guesthouse and visiting the major Children’s Hospital in Accra to see a premature newborn baby from their home. I learned from Mariette and Moses about many of the challenges, such as the dearth of financial and social support for children’s homes, when a child is sick, has disabilities or is born prematurely in Ghana.

Tuesday, October 9: I took a flight from Accra to Sunyani and Dr. Barimah was there to greet me at the airport and take me to my accommodation at the South Ridge Guest House, north-end of Sunyani, near Fiapre. After getting settled into my accommodation, Dr. Barimah brought me to the CUG campus in Fiapre to formally meet with Professor James Ephraim, Vice Chancellor, administrative staff, and PHAS faculty members and staff. I thanked the Vice Chancellor for the warm welcome and conveyed greetings from administration, faculty and staff at VIU. The Vice Chancellor confirmed CUG’s commitment to planning and implementing the new BSN degree program and said they were already having a number of enquiries from interested students in the community. Prof. Ephraim spoke about all the new construction that was going on at CUG such as a new block of offices for faculty and administration; new classroom and seminar spaces; three new student residences and faculty housing. He also spoke about the difference the new paved room had made in making the university more accessible to the local Fiapre-Sunyani community. Dr. Barimah also introduced me to the Information Technology (IT)
technicians, Security Personnel and Drivers, and I had a tour of the lecture halls, seminar rooms, the library, and the computer labs. Dr. Barimah also drove me to where the three new student residences (3 floors) and six faculty houses were being built. I also saw the new office blocks, seminar rooms, and a large cafeteria and a restaurant that had their roofs on and were in the final stages of construction. Dr. Barimah explained that moving administration to the new office blocks would free up more classroom space as well as space for the new nursing program and laboratory.

CUG’s administration, faculty, and staff went out of their way to ensure I was well cared for while I was a visiting professor on campus. During the first week, I established a daily routine of going to the CUG campus usually around 08:30am and staying until about 2:30-3pm. Aboagye, the CUG driver I was assigned for my stay at visiting professor, drove me to and from the university and to meetings in the community. The second day I was on campus I was introduced and received a warm welcome from members of the PHAS faculty and administrative department and given shared office space to work in. The IT techs were very helpful in getting WiFi access for my computer on campus. I found out that CUG opened in March 2003 with an enrolment of 50 students. There are now 4,500 students enrolled at CUG and the university is planning their 10 year anniversary for this March 2013. During my first week (Thursday, October 11), I was also delighted to meet the members of the new Nursing Committee at CUG and attend their first meeting at CUG.

CUG’s BSN Committee Members (L to R): Richard Henneh, Ghana Nurses & Midwife Council Board Member, Asutifi District Director of Ghana Health Services, and Part-Time CUG Lecturer (PHAS); Maggie Kennedy, BSN Program VIU; Vitalis Bawontuo, Full-Time CUG Lecturer (PHAS); Joana Apenkwaa, Full-Time CUG Lecturer (PHAS); Dr. Kofi Barimah, Dean & Lecturer of the PHAS Program at CUG; Yakubu Abubakari, Full-Time CUG Lecturer (PHAS); Peter Yeboah, Director of Health Services at Catholic Diocese of Goaso, Ghana, and Part-Time CUG Lecturer (PHAS), Josephine Koaranteng, Former Chair of the Community Nurses School, Tanoso (missing from photo).

The first meeting of the committee was an opportunity for the following:

- Introductions and learning about the different nursing programs available in the Brong Ahafo Region:
• Review the strengths and challenges with nursing as a profession and the need for specialized education such as maternal-child health, emergency room, operating room and Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)

• Discuss the main burden of disease in the local community. For example, Malaria remains of great concern (55% of the admissions to local hospitals) so there is a great need for effective prevention strategies such as education and nets

• Sharing information about how the 3 yr. Diploma State Registered Nurses (SRN) program is being phased out in Ghana and so there is a need for BSN programs to be established. During the phase out stages there will be a need for the SRN diploma nurses to be able to bridge-into degree programs to complete their BSN. Community Health Nurses (CHN) (2year diploma) will also be interested in taking post-basic midwifery programs and BSN degree programs. Once CUG has established their BSN program, they will also need to ensure access to education for SRN and CHN nurses.

• Current requirements to quality as a Public Health Nurse (PHN) in Ghana include: BSN 4 year degree program; 1 year Post- Basic Midwifery; and 1 year Post-Diploma Public Health Diploma.

• No current BSN programs available in the Brong Ahafo Region and the closest program is in Kumasi. Ministry of Education has placed a temporary moratorium on the creation of new nursing schools until a review of nursing in Ghana has been completed. The main concern is that too many schools are being developed in the southern regions and not enough in the more remote central and northern regions.

• A major challenges to setting up BSN programs include inadequate numbers of qualified faculty available to teach and the need for masters as well as undergraduate programs

• The Ghana Nurses & Midwives Council are currently implementing a decentralization plan to better support the transition to BSN education for nurses and a new office has just been opened in Sunyani for the Brong Ahafo Region

• The Accreditation process for new BSN programs in academic institutions involves 3 tiers:

1. Ministry of Education consults with the Ministry of Health to review applications from institutions of higher level for nursing programs. This is to ensure the university can accommodate the academic requirements such as sufficient qualified faculty; adequate classroom, library, laboratory, and student residences space. In addition, the review examines the practice context (Ghana Health Services) to ensure it is able to accommodate the learning needs of the students:

2. Once the Ministry of Education gives approval for the new BSN program, the next step is consulting with the Ghana Nurses & Midwives Council (GNMC) to ensure that the curriculum
meets the GNMC educational and practica requirements so that students are adequately prepared to write the final nursing exam and be able to meet the competencies for practice.

3. Once approval is received from the Ministries of Education, Health, and the GNMC, the application is then submitted to the National Accreditation Board for final ratification and approval.

- Currently a major challenge in nursing education in Ghana is the high failure rate among nursing students on their final licensure examinations. In 2011, only 40% of nursing students passed their final licensure examination and a high percentage of students who re-wrote the exam also failed. Students are allowed 3 re-writes and many end up leaving the nursing profession. Approximately 1,500 student nurses take the final licensure examination every year in Ghana.

**Main Actions to Take Forward:**

- Obtain the GNMC syllabus for nursing education in Ghana and review the educational requirements for nurses

- Arrange meeting with the following key stakeholders;
  
  I.  Zonal Officer for the new GNMC in Sunyani
  
  II. Cordelia Yeboah, Director of Nursing Services, Chief nursing officer, Brong Ahafo Region
  
  III. Dr. Jaco Abrbrese, Director of the Sunyani Regional General Hospital
  
  IV. Dr. Paulina Appiah, Director Municipal Health Directorate and Municipal Hospital Sunyani

- As CUG is affiliated with the University of Ghana in Legon, committee members thought it would be a good idea to consult with the Chair of the BSN program at this institution

- Verify the requirements of accreditation with the Ministries of Education & Health and complete an inventory for the nursing laboratory. **Next meeting:** Friday, October 26, 2012, 3-5pm.

**Saturday, October 13:** I attended Matriculation and Congregation graduation ceremonies on campus at CUG. Before and after the ceremonies, I attended a reception and I was introduced to a number of local and national community members and dignitaries who were interested in hearing about my work as a visiting professor at CUG. These included the local Chiefs, the CUG Board of Trustees, and Mrs. Nancy Yelpoe, Deputy Director, Ministry of Education in Accra.

**Key Outcomes Accomplished:** Many of the key outcomes [1-10] were accomplished during this first week at CUG. Clearly, CUG and representatives from GNMC, and Ghana Health Services support the creation of a new BSN as evidenced by their commitment to being on the BSN Committee and working collaboratively on the project.
Week II: Summary of Learning Activities & Accomplishment of Key Outcomes (Oct 15-19)

During my second week, I took the opportunity to meet with a number of the BSN members individually to clarify and review information and actions plans from our first meeting.

**Monday, October 15:** I had the opportunity to meet some of the Teaching Assistants (TAs) on campus today and learn about some of their challenges with facilitating teaching/learning with large and small groups of students. The Teaching Assistants were successful graduates with their Public Health Degree and were completing a mandatory year of National Service as TAs and received a small salary from CUG. In addition, I was invited to present to the ENACTUS group about community and societal health in Canada. I also learned about the community development work the ENACTUS group was involved in and how they brought their community projects to the World Cup in Washington, DC. Discussions with this group showed me how committed CUG was to collaborating with the local community on service learning projects to promote health and prevent illness.

**Tuesday, October 16:** I met with Dr. Barimah to discuss the basic entry-level educational requirements for students wanting to enroll in the BSN program and how the nursing curriculum could be revised to meet the basic GNMC requirements as well be recognized as having a major in maternal-child health or pediatric nursing. Dr. Barimah suggested I arrange a meeting with Madam Josephine Koranteng to obtain copies of the GNMC syllabus and review questions related to maternal-child content.

**Wednesday, October 17:** Meeting with the TAs and PHAS Faculty members to learn about Community Based Health Planning and Service Centre (CHIPS). The first CHIPS project was implemented in 2000. The numbers of these primary health care centres are increasing especially in the Northern Region. Each centre is designed to have solar power to ensure a steady supply of electricity for maintaining the cold chain for vaccines and methods of communication with larger health centres. Health care providers are
provided with free accommodation beside the clinic and security personnel as a recruitment and retention initiative to have nurses stay for longer periods in the community and strengthen partnerships for health. The CHIPS projects were identified by faculty as being suitable practica locations for BSN nurses in upper level courses as many of their PHAS students have completed internships working on CHIPS projects. A Community Health Nurse (CHN) receives 2 months CHIPS educational training before working and living in the community. The CHN is also provided with a motorbike to visit families and there is a common fund where everyone contributes a small amount so that there is sufficient funding for emergency transport to larger centres. Funding of the CHIPS projects is provided by Ghana Health Services (GHS) in partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Local businesses such as mining companies are also supporting these primary health care centres where they workers and their families needing access to health care services.

Thursday, October 18: Meeting with Madam Josephine Koranteng to review the GNMC Syllabus and explore how to integrate content related to maternal-child Health. In addition, I learned about the range of different educational programs for health care workers locally and across Ghana. These include: SRN (3-year diploma program) with specialties in General and Mental Health Nursing and Nursing Midwifery; Health Assistant (2 year diploma); Community Health Nursing (2 year diploma) which qualifies successful applicants to take a one-year post-basic midwifery program; Environmental Health Officers (2-year diploma program); and the Disease Control Officer (2-year diploma program). Lessons Learned: The GNMC syllabus outlines the minimum educational requirements, content areas, and practica hours that a nursing student needs to qualify to take the exam for licensure as a nurse in Ghana. In the SRN programs, this content was organized over a 3-year span, but with the new BSN program there would be an extra year of educational studies to integrate community and public health competencies as well as specialty areas such as maternal-child, obstetrics, gynecology, and pediatrics.

Friday, October 19: I visited the Sunyani Polytechnic campus to met with Kwadwo Thomas Djang-Fordjour, Rector of Sunyani Polytechnic (S. Poly); Samuel Obour, Registrar at S. Poly; Aminu Bonifacio, Coordinator (National Service position) for the Brong Ahafo Research and Extension Centre (BAREC); and Mrs. Victoria Adu, Lecturer at S.Poly. This was a great opportunity to build on previous discussions that Judy Southwell and I had with Thomas and Samuel when they had visited VIU (June, 2012) about organizing Instructional Skills Workshops (ISW) in Sunyani (June 2013) for interested faculty from the three universities: S.Poly; University for Energy & Natural Resources (UENR) (formerly Faculty of Forestry & Resources (FFRT); and CUG. As I am also a regular member of the VIU and S.Poly Skype Reading Circle, it was great to meet with Victoria and Aminu to discuss ongoing collaborations for this valuable professional development initiative. Aminu also explained to me that CUG was now a member in good standing with BAREC and they were looking forward to collaborations on research projects.

Saturday, October 20: I was invited by Lawrence Antwi, Dean of UENR (formerly FFRT), to the funeral celebration for his late wife, Mrs. Antwi, and I attended the funeral at the UENR campus. I met with Lawrence and his children, family and friends and conveyed sympathies on their loss from administration, faculty, and students at VIU. I was also able to renew acquaintances with UENR faculty and talked with Professors Mrs. Sylvia Adu and Mr. Emmanuelael Acquah.
Sunday, October 21: I was invited and attended church services and family dinner with Mrs. Victoria Adu and her husband and children at their family home outside Sunyani.

Key Outcomes Accomplished: I was able to continue to accomplish many of the key learning outcomes especially with regard to strengthening partnerships and learning about nursing and other health care provider educational programs in Ghana. I was also able to renew acquaintances with partners at the S.Poly and engage in dialogue about continuing education and professional development opportunities for faculty, students, staff.

Madam Josephine Koranteng & Maggie Kennedy reviewing the GNMC Nursing Syllabus

Maggie with Elijah and Adriana, Teaching Assistants at CUG

Week III: Summary of Learning Activities & Accomplishment of Key Outcomes  (Oct 22-26)

Highlights of my learning journey this week included:

- Tuesday, October 23: I attended the celebration and regular committee meeting of the ENACTUS, Community Development group on campus. Met afterwards with the supervising professor for the ENACTUS group, Madame Vida Korang, to discuss possibilities for collaboration on community development projects between nursing students at VIU and CUG’s Public Health Students. Arranged to visit some of the projects that were planned and implemented in collaboration with the local Chiefs and community members. Later in the morning, I attended
the PHAS research class on campus at CUG, and participated in learning activities related to conducting literature reviews, American Psychological Association (APA) referencing format, and different research methodologies. In the afternoon, I participated in the Skype Reading Circles between faculty at VIU and S. Poly, and shared my experiences with the group.

- **Wednesday, Oct 24:** At 10:00am, I had a meeting with Madam Cordelia Yeboah, Director of Nursing Services, Chief Nursing Officer for Ghana health Services (GHS), Brong Ahafo Region, and we discussed the strengths and challenges of nursing practice and nursing education in Ghana. Cordelia said she greatly supported the creation of a BSN program in the Sunyani community as the nearest program was in the city of Kumasi, Ashanti Region, and students found it difficult to travel and also find affordable accommodation in larger centres. Cordelia expressed concern about the practical skills and educational preparation of nurses in Ghana and the need for enhancing educational programs in areas such as critical thinking skills, nursing informatics, and communication and leadership skills. Cordelia assured me that the GHS would support the new BSN program at CUG in terms of providing practice placements for nursing students in the hospitals and community clinics. She also walked me down the hallway to introduce me to Dr Timothy Letsa, Brong-Ahafo Regional Director of Health Services. Dr. Letsa reiterated what Cordelia had already told me about GHS supporting accessibility to practice placements for nursing students. Dr. Letsa assured me that he would do everything he could to assist CUG’s BSN committee in their work and emphatically stated how important the program was for enhancing the health of the community. Cordelia also phoned Georgina Sam, the local Zonal Officer for the GNMC, to introduce me and I was able to arrange a lunch-time meeting. **12:30:** I had a meeting with Georgina at the new offices for GNMC in downtown Sunyani. Lessons learned from this meeting included:
  
  - GNMC plans to decentralize and have new regional offices across Ghana
  - GNMC support is available for the creation of new BSN programs and accreditation processes. Georgina said it was important to communicate with the head offices in Accra and register intent to create a new BSN program in Sunyani, and work collaboratively with Mr.Richard Henneh, BSN committee members as he was a Board member of GNMC and had many years of experience working with nursing programs in Ghana.
  - Georgina also shared some information about processes related to bringing nursing students to Ghana for practice experiences and recommended I contact Angie at Head office in Accra

- **Thursday, October 25:** Participated in Professor Joana Apenkwa’s nutrition class with PHAS students. There were about 120 students in the class and professor used many questions to actively engage the students in learning. It was interesting to participate in the class and talk with the professor about the challenges of teaching large classes.
- **Friday, October 26**: The meeting for the BSN committee was cancelled for today as the university was closed for the Islamic Festival of Eidul-Adha, a statutory public holiday in Ghana. Meeting rescheduled for Tuesday, October 30, 3-5pm.

- **Sunday, Oct 28**: I visited Hanukkah Children’s Home outside Sunayni and met with the children; Moses, the director; and the workers and volunteers. Mariette, Moses’ wife, who is also a director, was visiting the Netherlands so we didn’t meet on this visit. Moses was excited about having a new BSN program in Sunyani and said he would be very interested in having practice placements for CUG and VIU on study abroad field schools.

**Key Outcomes Accomplished**: This week was very productive in terms of partnerships with community members. I also had the opportunity to meet with students, participate in meetings and classes with students and faculty. In addition, I was able to find out some key information for planning study abroad experiences for VIU nursing students.

**Week IV: Summary of Learning Activities & Accomplishment of Key Outcomes**

Highlights of my learning journey this week included:
Monday, Oct 29: I had a meeting with the Teaching Assistants on campus who were interested in engaging in professional development activities. For example, learning strategies to facilitate teaching and learning and how to start their own Reading Circle on campus. They asked me if I would help to facilitate their first Reading Circle and do a presentation on designing participatory lesson plans, writing learning outcomes and Bloom’s Taxonomy. I agreed to work on the presentation and arrange a time for the Reading Circle.

Tuesday, Oct 30: 2nd. Meeting of the BSN Committee: I reported on my meetings with Cordelia Yeboah, Dr. Thomas Letsa, and Georgina Sam. Richard Henneh reported on his work with the Ministry of Health around accreditation processes. He said that he had been in contact with the Chief Nursing Office for the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Accra and that the Ministry greatly supported the new BSN program for Sunyani. He also said that the MOH was planning to lift the moratorium on new nursing programs soon and that it would be important to be ready to submit a letter of intent with the proposal for the new school of nursing. I asked Richard for the name of the Chief Nursing Office for Ghana and he said his name was Dr. George Kumah Kyeremeh. A few minutes later, Richard passed me the phone and said that Dr. George would like to speak with me. I was so surprised that I asked if other members of the committee/PHAS faculty wanted to speak with him? They all smiled and said he is waiting to speak with you, so I spoke with Dr. George on the phone. He thanked me for working with the BSN Committee members and assured me that his office greatly supported the creation of a new nursing school in Sunyani. He wished us all the best with our work and to call him any time if we had questions. Other items for discussion included: identification of practicum sites; inventory for nursing laboratory and possible liaison with Ghana Health Services to maintain equipment; process for accreditation with the Ministry of Education; and updating the nursing syllabus. Dr. Barimah is arranging to travel to Accra to meet with representatives of the Ministries of Health and Education, GNMC, the Canadian Consulate, and Chair of the nursing program at University of Ghana, Legon. The committee also plans to work on drafting a teaching/learning philosophy that fits with the values and beliefs of CUG and PHAS to guide the work of curriculum design and implementation. I agreed to continue to meet with community partners in the health sector and Dr. Barimah will arrange a meeting with the Grand Chief and Council for the Sunyani Municipality.

Wednesday, October 31 to Friday, Nov 1: Worked on campus and met with Professor Vitalis Bawontuo to discuss the nursing laboratory. Vitalis teaches microbiology and said that he would like to see a nursing laboratory that also includes equipment for microbiology. I worked on the inventory for the nursing laboratory. I also had a meeting with Professor Yakabu Abubakari who teaches information technology to PHAS students. Yakabu said he would be willing to work on developing an Informatics course for nurses as computer systems were now being installed in many of GHS hospitals and clinics and nurses of the future will need to have this education and training. Yakabu invited me to join PHAS faculty and students on a field trip to Bonsasso Millennium Villages on Monday, November 5. This village uses eHealth and technology to triage patients and ensure access to timely health services. Vitalis and Yabubu agreed to present their
ideas for discussion related to the laboratory and informatics at our next BSN Committee meeting.

**Key Outcomes Accomplished:** This past week, I could see tremendous strengths in the abilities of the BSN committee to collaborate and work together to achieve program objectives. I personally enjoyed meeting with committee members on an individual basis to hear their visions for the BSN program. I also felt honoured that the Teaching Assistants invited me to collaborate with them on professional development initiatives as this shows the commitment to teaching/learning excellence on campus.

Meeting Zonal Officer for the Ghana Nurses & Midwives Council (GNMC) and Staff

**Week V: Summary of Learning Activities & Accomplishment of Key Outcomes (Nov 5-9)**

**Highlights of my learning journey this week included:**

- **Monday, November 5:** Field Trip to Bonsasso, outside Kumasi (Obuasai area). My visit helped me to learn about new models of health care that are currently being implanted and piloted in Ghana. For example, the visit to the Millennium Development Village at Bonsasso showed me how Information Technology is making a difference. Cell phones are used by Health Assistants and Community Support Workers to communicate with nurses and assess the health needs of individuals and families in a timely manner. These workers can also ensure timely access to medications and prevent unneeded visits to overcrowded Emergency Rooms in Kumasi. Despite the long journey - 3 ½ hours to and from the village – I really appreciated learning about the expanded role of nurses in these communities and how technology is integral to providing timely and appropriate care.

- **Tuesday, November 6:** I attended a meeting of the ENACTUS group and confirmed plans to visit the local communities where they were collaborating with community partners on health and entrepreneurial projects to promote health and reduce poverty.
**Wednesday, Nov 7:** I visited the local communities of Mantukwa and Tanoso with ENACTUS members to see a community bread oven and visit a Prayer Camp for people living with mental health challenges. I had an opportunity to connect with the Chiefs, community members and hear about some of the strengths and challenges of living in their communities. The community bread oven has enabled the local women to bake and sell their bread locally and in the market. At the Prayer Camp, I saw men and women engage in projects such as extracting palm oil to sell by the roadside and creating pottery plates. Both these initiatives have facilitated empowerment for the community to implement poverty prevention strategies. In each community we visited, the women talked about the lack of access to pre-school education and care for their children especially when they are working on the projects. The ENACTUS students discussed with the local Chiefs some ideas for how the PHAS students could collaborate with teacher education programs to see if early childhood education and care programs could be created in the community. We also discussed how this could be an opportunity for service-learning practica for the new BSN program.

**Thursday, November 8, 2012:** Facilitated a Reading Circle in participation with the Teaching Assistants (TAs) on campus at CUG. We had an opportunity to discuss teaching basics, lesson planning, writing learning objectives, planning participatory strategies for large classes, and the use of Bloom’s Taxonomy in planning lessons. The session was held in a small seminar room in the new block of offices on campus and the TA’s seemed to greatly enjoy having a safe space to discuss their strengths and challenges with facilitating teaching and learning. I encouraged them to continue to make time for their Reading Circle and that the Dr. Kofi Barimah greatly supported their efforts to engage in professional development activities on campus.

**Friday, November 9:** I attended a PHAS Faculty meeting at CUG and the BSN Sub Committee was expected to report on their work. I reported on my work around reviewing the syllabus with Madam Josephine Koranteng and meeting with key stakeholders in the community to assess the level of support for the BSN program locally. The PHAS faculty members on the BSN committee also reported on their work and ideas for the BSN programs such as the design of the nursing laboratory and the creation of Nursing Informatics Course.

**Sunday, November 11:** Dr. Kofi Barimah invited me to a delicious Ghanaian Sunday dinner at his home and to meet his family. After dinner, Kofi and I were invited to visit the Paramount Chief for the Sunyani District - Nana Bosoma Asor Nkrawiri II, Omanhene of Sunyani, at his palace in Sunyani. Kofi and I explained about the new BSN program and how we hoped the nursing students could engage in service-learning practica opportunities in collaboration with local Chiefs and community members that would contribute to promoting community health and well-being. Nana Bosoma Asor said that he would support our new venture and that he would present our plans to the local Chiefs and Tribal Band members for endorsement. We thanked Nana for his support.
**Key Outcomes Accomplished:** I found that having the opportunity to participate in the PHAS field trip to the Bonsasso Millennium Village was a great way to strengthen relationships with faculty and students. I talked with many different students on the bus and while we were visiting the villages about what they were learning and how they liked to learn. In addition, I had the opportunity to learn about valuable health initiatives that were being implemented at the community level in Ghana. I could see how the PHAS program could build on their strengths with the local communities of Fiapre, Mantukwa and Tanoso through serviced-based learning practice experiences for nursing students collaborating with the Public Health Degree students with the support of the local Chiefs and Tribal Councils.

![CUG Field Trip to the Millennium Development Villages, Obuasi area near Kumasi](image)

**Week VI: Summary of Learning Activities & Accomplishment of Key Outcomes (Nov 12-16)**

Highlights of my learning journey this week included:

- **Monday, November 12:** I had a meeting with Dr. Jacon Abrebrese, Director of the Sunyani Regional General Hospital, and he assured his support for the new BSN program. We arranged a
meeting at the Sunyani Hospital and also meet with the Madame Martha Oppong, Matron of the hospital.

- **Tuesday, November 13**: Meeting at Sunyani General Hospital with Dr. Jacob Abrebrese and Madam Martha Oppong. I had a tour of the hospital and Matron said she was very new to the position. I explained about the new BSN program and she said that there a great need to enhance nursing education in Ghana and she said she would support the new BSN program at CUG in relationship to providing practice experiences for students. She explained that there were many hospitals within a short distance of Sunyani and encouraged me to also partner with these hospitals – public and private – to ensure high quality learning experiences. I also explained that I would be returning to Sunyani with a field school in April/May (2013) and VIU would like to continue to arrange learning experiences in the Sunyani Regional Hospital. I arranged to contact Martha in the new year to confirm request for the VIU field school.

- **Tuesday, November 13**: One of the TAs who attended the Reading Circle invited me to attend his class on Research Methods with PHAS students. I was delighted to see how he had integrated a lot of what we had discussed during the Reading Circle. For example, he had written out the learning outcomes for the class on a PowerPoint and took the time to assess the level of knowledge among the students related to the learning outcomes.

- **Wednesday, Nov 14**: I visited the Sunyani Municipal Hospital and met with Dr. Paulina Appiah, the new Director of Health Services, who assured her support for the BSN program and her willingness to collaborate with faculty on the planning of practica for nursing students. I also explained about my plans to return to Sunyani with a VIU nursing field school (April/May 2013) and how much VIU faculty and students would appreciate the continued support of hospital administration and staff for access to practice placements, which would be mainly observational for VIU nursing students. Dr. Appiah assured me of her support for our proposal and I arranged to contact her in the year with further information.

- **Thursday, Nov 15**: I attended meeting with PHAS faculty, the Vice Chancellor, and the Teaching Assistants to thank them for making me feel so welcome and for all their kindness and hospitality to me. I also met with Dr. Barimah and assured him of my continued commitment to collaborate with the BSN committee in areas such as curriculum design and preparing the proposal for funding of the BSN program to CID/A. We arranged that I would continue to collaborate with BSN committee members over email, Skype and when I returned to Ghana next April/May. Dr. Barimah invited me to dinner with his family that evening at his home. I was so surprised to see that he had invited PHAS faculty members; Aboagye, my driver; the Teaching Assistants; and Madame Josephine Koranteng. We had a wonderful evening enjoying delicious Ghanaian foods, singing and dancing.

- **Friday, Nov 17**: I had an early morning visit to Hanukkah Children’s Home to say goodbye to the children, Moses, the volunteers and the workers, before leaving for the airport. Dr. Barimah and Mrs. Victoria Adu also came to the airport to say goodbye. When I arrived in Accra, I went to the Gillbt Guest House, and the driver for the Guest House drove me to the Ghana Nurses and Midwives Head Office. I had arranged a meeting with Angie Carmen Appiah, Customer Service for the GNMC. We talked about my collaborations with the CUG on the new nursing program and plans to return with VIU nursing students in April/May 2013. Angie recommended that VIU
contact any health clinics or hospitals where we planned to have students and have administration send a letter of invitation to the GNMC. She explained that the GNMC would like to know when and where foreign students are visiting in Ghana so they can be a support for them and their supervising faculty.

I spent my last few days on the South Coast of Ghana visiting with VIU alumni and Mariette, from Hanukkah Children’s Home, who had just returned from the Netherlands. I also attended a fundraiser for the Enslavement Prevention Alliance - West Africa. In addition, I had an opportunity to visit the UNESCO nominated, Nzulezo Village, outside Takoradi.
Meeting Nana Bosoma Asor Nkrawiri II, Paramount Chief for Sunyani District

Next Steps and Recommendations

The whole experience of traveling to Ghana and collaborating with CUG faculty, staff, and students as a visiting professor on the planning of their new BSN program greatly exceeded my expectations in many different ways. For instance, I saw the strengths of the PHAS faculty in their commitment to ensuring excellence in teaching and learning despite the lack of technological and other resources. Students were constantly meeting professors in the shared spaces and offices and receiving support for their learning. The ENACTUS projects are clear evidence of CUG’s commitment to reaching out to the local communities and collaborating at the grassroots level on poverty reduction and health promotion initiatives. The BSN committee is clearly committed to ensuring successful outcomes for the BSN program, working with the local community to arrange practica, and ensuring that nursing education is in line with the health needs of the community. Evidence of this collaboration can be seen with representatives on the BSN committee from the GNMC and hospital administration. The Directors of the Sunyani General Hospital and the Goasu Health District are also part-time lecturers at CUG. Certainly, CUG faces challenges with implementing their new nursing program such as the recruitment and retention of qualified Masters prepared lecturers and finding the funding to equip a new nursing laboratory. However, it was evident that the faculty has much strength such as their respectful and collaborative relationships with local Chiefs and community members. I believe these relationships are key to overcoming obstacles now and in the future. Certainly, many of the key outcomes outlined at the start of this report were accomplished. However, as with any community development project it continues to be a work in progress as we build respectful and trusting partnerships and mutually identify needs and ways to meet them. Next steps and plans to take forward include:

- Maintaining open communication channels with the CUG BSN Committee either through email or Skype and assisting as needed with curriculum design or other areas for joint consultation
• Continue to develop and gather information for preparation and submission for the CIDA proposal to help fund the BSN program with a maternal-child health focus at CUG.

• Continue to support strategies for collaboration and cooperative learning between faculty, staff and students at VIU and CUG. For example, I would like to recommend that VIU nursing students collaborate on the ENACTUS community development projects with CUG students virtually over Skype and also when they are on the field school in April/May. This would enable VIU students to learn about community development projects before they travel to Ghana and ensure they have the educational preparation to assist with the project. For example, increasing their knowledge about the burden of disease in Ghana (Malaria/HIV/AIDS) and learning about the social determinants of health and prevention strategies.

• I plan to return to Ghana in April/May 2013 with a VIU faculty and 11 nursing students to continue strengthening partnerships for learning with CUG and engage in community development projects. This will also be an opportunity to continue to collaborate with the BSN committee.

• Promote awareness of the “sister school” relationship between CUG and VIU through giving presentations to VIU faculty, students and community members.

• Gather resources such as nursing textbooks that will enhance CUG’s library and promote successful outcomes for accreditation and student learning.

• Following the VIU Field school in Ghana April/May (2013), I plan to extend my time in Ghana to work with Judy Southwell, Honorary Research Associate at VIU, on professional development initiatives such as ISW and Faculty Development Workshops (FDW) for faculty at S. Poly, CUG and UENR.

I would like to sincerely acknowledge all the support I have received from the Travel and Study Abroad Grant Committee who made it possible for me to travel to Ghana and participate on educational initiatives that have the potential to enhance health for all Ghanaians. This learning experience has been a highlight of my years working at VIU and I feel excited about the prospect of continuing to promote the development of nursing programs in developing countries such as Ghana. I feel energized to continue to volunteer on projects that facilitate empowerment and foster the skills and expertise needed for health care and education. The most profound learning I take away from this learning experience is the importance of having a strengths based approach to working with communities in developing countries and enabling them to take control over, and improve their own infrastructures for health and education. Yes, I agree that accomplishing key outcomes is essential to achieving goals. However, I believe that it is the process of how we work together, in the spirit of respectful and reciprocal relationships, that is crucial for building capacity and long term sustainability of projects.
## Appendix A

### Contact List for Visit to Ghana (2012)

<table>
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