

Broader impact: Workshop and participation in the inaugural “Southern and Eastern Africa Network of Analytical Chemists” Meeting (Botswana; July, 2003)



James A. Holcombe; Dept. of Chemistry and Biochemistry;
University of Texas at Austin; (CHE-0315336)

A supplement to this NSF grant funded travel of a group of US scientists and a Zimbabwe graduate student working on his PhD in the US to the inaugural “Southern and Eastern Africa Network of Analytical Chemists” (SEANAC) meeting in Gaborone, Botswana. The US delegation presented workshops on “Mentoring” and “Publishing and Presenting Scientific Research” to African students and faculty. Additionally, each had a keynote talk in the technical sessions and were involved in judging student posters and presenting the student awards during the conference dinner. Excellent interactions took place on scientific research, research opportunities for students and scientific collaborations.

It was an excellent forum for initiating ties between US and African scientists as well as an opportunity to provide friendly and positive mentoring for the next generation of African researchers. The symposium also provided a first hand view of a wide cross section of research and analytical chemical problems that were of interest to industry and academia in the southern part of Africa.

It also was very worthwhile having Mr. Nicholas Madhiri (a US graduate student from Zimbabwe) as part of the group. He not only provided us with insights on Africa and the students *before* the conference, he was extremely useful in furnishing a perspective to other African students who were curious about graduate studies in the US.



**Five US participants (l-r):
Drs. O. Sadik, J.
Holcombe, E. Lindner, J.
Gardea-Torresdey and
grad student N. Madhiri.
(Also shown is the
University of Botswana
Chemistry Department's
showpiece instrument, a
600 MHz NMR.)**

While there is no unique formula for a “successful trip” of this nature, several characteristics of the travel itinerary and personnel proved quite successful. We intentionally arrived in Botswana a few days in advance of the conference. In addition to shaking off jet lag, we also became acquainted with one another and our areas of research expertise since, by design, we were active in diverse areas of analytical and environmental chemistry. We felt that it was essential that we not spend time at the conference talking between ourselves.

