



Introduction

The University of Buea American Corner (UBAC) continued with its routine activities of counselling and making available information resources to users. Besides these routine activities, the Corner programmed activities with respect to the following events:

- Visit of the American Ambassador to the UBAC
- Black History month celebration on the theme: Black American Leaders: What lessons for African Leadership?
- International day of the Woman on the theme: Women and decision Making: Meeting the Challenges and strategies for change.

Visit of the American Ambassador to the UBAC

The visit of the US Ambassador, H.E. Neils Marquardt to the University of Buea took place on Tuesday February 28, 2006 and more specifically to UBAC in the afternoon between 14:30-16:00. It is worth noting that this visit to the corner was programmed to last from 14:30-15:30 but it lasted longer as indicated above.

This visit coincided with parts of the activities of the Black History Month celebration by the UBAC and it was then possible for the Ambassador to share parts of the celebration. This had to do with what the corner had coined, as "Black History in Paintings". There were about 50 paintings displayed in an exhibition revealing parts of the History of African Americans.

The Ambassador during the visit was given a tour of the University of Buea (UB) library and more specifically introduced to the American Corner where he was able to have a meeting with the Fulbright Scholars and an International visitor who had been invited to this ceremony by UBAC and all of whom are staff of UB.

The artists were given room during the visit to explain the historical meaning of the different paintings to the Ambassador. This ended with a presentation of a gift to the Ambassador (portrait of himself).



H.E. Neils Marquardt watches as the artist explains the meaning of the paintings



H.E. Neils Marquardt in the UBAC with the Fulbright Scholars

The Corner was satisfied with the high degree of response to all the invitations sent out during this event and with the good job done by the facilitators of the event, (the artists).

The Black History month Celebration.

The UBAC continued with the programme on the Black History month on Wednesday March 1, 2006 with a panel discussion. The American corner invited the departments of, Political Science and History as facilitators of this panel discussion. The Corner equally invited a specialist in the area of American History in the person of Professor Emeritus Lovette Elango to take part in the panel discussion. The panel discussion started at 11:30 and ended at 13:00. This was presided over by the Vice-Chancellor's representative, Chief Dr. Ebanja(Deputy Vice-Chancellor/Control).

The moderator of the discussion was Dr. Forchingong, Head of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration.

Seven persons constituted the panel and the theme of the discussion was; Black American Leaders: What Lessons for African Leadership.

The discussion focused on the problem of leadership in Africa, its challenges and the lessons African leaders could learn from Black American "Model" leaders. The presentation was done in three different parts by three different panellists and touched on the following sub-themes.

1. Concept of leadership
 - The Autocratic style
 - The democratic or participative style
 - The free-rein or laissez-faire style.
2. Black American Civil rights leaders
 - Rosa Parks
 - Martin Luther King Jr.
 - Rev Jesse Jackson.
3. Lessons and challenges for African leadership.
 - Lessons for the civil society on social transformation.
 - The adoption of peaceful and non violent strategies in the fight for social justice and equality.
 - Lesson on Historical injustices and against enslavement based on social background or perpetuation of social injustices.

Discussions

Discussions on the presentations were opened and very exciting issues and questions were raised some of which included:

- People took a common ground on the fact that Africa has been for a long time struggling for a change which is yet to come and that there was a need to draw inspiration from African-American Leaders.
- They saw the need for the role of the Church in every change as was the experience with the African-American example.
- The issue that African leaders lack true characteristics of leaders or leadership qualities.
- The idea of panafricanism from the time of independence could be revisited.
- There was the issue raised on the lack of consciences by African leaders who are more autocratic and thus prevent real leaders to be groomed.

Too many reactions continued showing that the people present found the event useful, but there was a need to end the programme. Thus the question that was raised as a take home assignment was,

"What is my view and attitude towards leadership at all levels in the Cameroonian society?"

This ended with the moderator's concluding remarks and this event was formally closed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Control, sitting in for the Vice-Chancellor.



UBAC Coordinator presents UBAC during Black History Month:



US Black History Month: Panel Discussion

The International Day of the Woman.

The American Corner was equally able to programme a symposium on the theme “Women and Decision Making: Meeting challenges and strategies for change”. The Corner carried out this programming in collaboration with two partners:

- The Department of Women and Gender Studies.
- The Delegation of Women’s Empowerment and the family.

This programme took place on 6 March 2006 from 13:00 – 19:00 at the youth and animation centre. Women from different works of life constituted the panellist that led the various discussions with a focus on the different works of life. Amongst these were; a Woman parliamentarian, a University female Don, a specialist in the area of Women and Gender Studies, three Magistrates from the high court, civil court and Appeal court, an elderly and retired woman from the field of Education, a female student from the University of Buea, a rural woman, a Journalist and the coordinator of UBAC.



Panelist at the symposium.

The audience was made up of rural women, educated women, men and young people. Each woman with a specialist background was given a few minutes to lead discussions focussing on their career background and everyone in the hall was allowed to share their point of view. The event was organised as follows:

- There was an introduction of the theme by a moderator.
- There was an overview of the current situation/status of the women and youth (girl child) in decision making in Cameroon.
- This was spiced by an animation.
- Then came a presentation and discussion of experiences of African-American Women in decision making that had gone down the annals of history by the coordinator of UBAC (copy of presentation attached)
- After all the discussions, there was a need to draw a way forward and propose strategies for change.

A summary of the discussions was made by the delegate of MINPROFF (Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and the Family).

Then came a closure of the panel discussions and animation by different groups of women.

Besides the event, there was a joint production of a news letter by UBAC, Women and Gender studies and MINPROFF (copy to be sent by ordinal mail).

This event was seen to be very exciting and welcomed. In all the UBAC was satisfied with the turn out at the events in general terms and the way all the events went. We hope to get through with the form of this report suitable for the American corner website.



Audience at the symposium.

Rosemary M. Shafack
Coordinator UBAC