

# RISE Delegation visits the University of Botswana

The United States of America's Regional Initiative in Science and Education (RISE) headed by its Executive Director Ms. Arlen Hastings, and its Program Associate, Ms. Lori Mulcare, visited and met with the University of Botswana (UB) management, staff, and students on June 24, 2011.

RISE was established in 2008 to prepare PhD and MSc-level scientists and engineers in sub-Saharan Africa through university-based research and training networks in selected disciplines. Its primary emphases are on training new staff to teach in African universities and upgrading the qualifications of current staff, specifically the supervisory capacity through co-supervision of students.

The purpose of the visit by the RISE delegation was to meet representatives of government ministries of science, higher education and finance (or equivalents), as well as regional organizations. The objectives were to provide information about the work RISE is doing, including its potential to contribute to local economies, to explain the efforts by RISE to scale up and sustain RISE through the involvement of the World Bank and other partners; and to discuss mechanisms for support of regional initiatives.

The meetings were to ensure that the university administrators are familiar with the activities of RISE, to learn about other networks the university is part of that might be complementary to RISE, to discuss ways in which RISE might better help the University meet some of its objectives, to encourage University leaders to serve as advocates to their governments for increased support for research and training in the sciences. In addition, RISE is seeking an Africa-based co-secretariat, and wished to hear University leaders' views on regional organizations that might be suitable candidates. They also came to discuss the idea of product development and commercialization resulting from selected student research, and to learn about existing university systems and policies pertaining to commercialization of research.

Among other things, the RISE wanted to meet academic staff and students at RISE network nodes, to discuss progress, concerns and suggestions and to conduct interviews to be posted on the Science Initiative Group (SIG) blog (<http://sites.ias.edu/sig/blog>). The objectives were to provide an informal assessment of RISE progress, to address any issues, and to generate publicity and support for the initiative in general and student research in particular.

The delegation also explored ways that might enable visiting professors from abroad to add value to the RISE networks.

RISE is supported by a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York and administered by the Science Initiative Group (SIG), based at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, USA. Carnegie funds support five competitively selected networks in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the SIG secretariat, whose responsibilities include monitoring and evaluation, organization of joint conferences and meetings, website maintenance, partnership development, and overall coordination of the initiative. Carnegie funding was recently renewed through 2013.

SIG is in discussion with the World Bank, Carnegie Corporation, and other organizations and foundations about a significant expansion of RISE to the tune of ten fold over the coming years. This would translate in to more number of networks in other disciplines, involvement of more African Universities and sponsorship for a proportionately larger number of MSc/ MPhil and PhD students.

UB is a member of two RISE networks, the



Front row (L to R): Prof. P K Jain (AMSEN node Coordinator), Ms. Arlen Hastings (Executive Director, RISE), Prof. T Fako (VC), and Ms. Lori Mulcare (Program Associate, RISE).  
Back row (L to R): Prof G Anderson (Acting Dean, SGS), Prof. A Ngowi (Dean, FET), Prof. W R Masamba (SSAWRN node Coordinator), Prof. D. Sebudubudu (Executive Asst to VC), Prof. I Mazonde (Acting DVC- AA and Director, ORD), and Dr. O Daman (Acting Dean, FoS).



# f Botswana

African Materials Science and Engineering Network (AMSEN), and the Sub-Saharan Africa Water Resource Network (SSAWRN). The UB node of AMSEN is coordinated by Prof. Pushpendra Jain, Department of Physics, and the SSAWRN node at the Okavango Research Institute (ORI), Maun is coordinated by Prof. Wellington Masamba.

At UB, two meetings were scheduled for the RISE delegation. One of the meetings was attended by RISE staff and students, node coordinators, heads of the departments involved in RISE networks, and academics interested in the work of RISE but not necessarily currently involved. The second meeting was attended by the Vice Chancellor, (DVCAA), Director (ORD), Deans of the Faculties of Science, and Engineering and Technology, Dean School of Graduate of studies, and the UB node coordinators.

In addition, they also visited the materials research facilities and laboratories at the faculty of Science and the Mechanical Engineering Department. Over all, the visit was successful, and most of the set objectives were achieved.

## from page 1

to health information. Therefore, smartphones will often serve as the source of up-to-date medical information, and students in more resource-limited areas will use them as a 'just in time' information provider" explained Ms. Aileen Chang from UPENN, as she addressed an evaluation workshop recently. The workshop was organized to measure how physicians will access medical information for patients.

According to Chang, access to computers at Marina Referral hospital in Gaborone is limited, and access in remote locations is even more challenging. Moreover, considering that specialist mentors are not readily available, this piloting project will minimize challenges.

## Senior Government Financial Managers attend FIMC

The Deputy Accountant, General Mr. Othusitse Lebuletswe, urged senior Government financial managers to fully take advantage of the Financial Management Development Course (FIMC) - through active participation - to enhance their financial knowledge and skills.

Speaking at the opening of the Sixth FIMC at the University of Botswana recently, Mr Lebuletswe noted that public sector financial managers have to maintain professional knowledge and skill at the level required to ensure the delivery of competent service based on current developments and thinking in practice, legislation and techniques. He challenged participants to be more relevant and useful, not only at the work place, but also in the national, social and economic sphere.

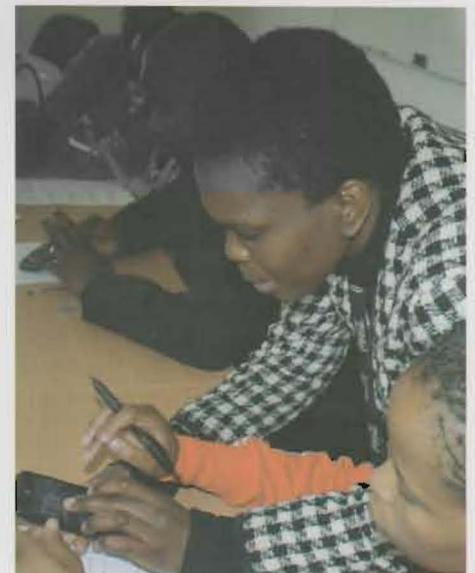
The Financial Management Development Course is tailored to equip participants with an array of basic tools and competencies necessary to fulfil public expectations and good governance. The course focuses on providing participants with knowledge and an understanding of basic concepts of managerial decision-making at strategic and operational levels. Key elements discussed during the two weeks course included accountability, transparency, timeliness and accurate financial information and ethics.

This year, this annual course was run by the University of Botswana (UB) Faculty of Business in collaboration with the East and Southern African Association of Accountant General (ESAAG). ESAAG is a collaboration of Accountants General of regional member countries Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

ESAAG was established in 1995, and its concept was conceived in the early nineties on the realisation that many of the problems regarding financial management in the region were similar. Problems such as poor administration of public funds, lack of public accountability and transparency were identical in countries concerned. Consequently, there was a common appreciation of the value of sharing experiences from different countries in the areas of system development, skills development and institutional capacity building.

ESAAG's objectives are to establish cooperation between countries in the region in the area of Government accounting, provision of a forum for participants to review and discuss comparative experiences and encouraging the development of Government Accounting Personnel and Trainers through the implementation of a regional programme of attachment and the production of a number of comparative case studies.

The evaluation workshop entailed completing eight clinical scenarios, which included questions that would come up during patient care, feedback on the resources they used and how long it took them to find the answer. The results of this study will be used to understand which resources are mostly used by physicians and thus worth continued investment in by the healthcare system.



Medical student piloting Telemedicine.