



## THE PEACE ADVOCATE



**An occasional newsletter about SMCM's Gambia PEACE program**

Mission: To expand the exchange of SMCM and other non-Gambian students, faculty and staff with the University of The Gambia and other educational institutions in The Gambia and Senegal to increase understanding and enhance academic excellence among all partners.

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This is the fifth issue of *The PEACE Advocate*. St. Mary's program in The Gambia, West Africa has grown steadily since its inception in 1996. Its designation as an SMCM Signature Program in 2006 was in recognition for a full decade of mutually beneficial collaborative activity with a wide range of educational, research and service organizations in The Gambia. Every year, SMCM students, faculty, staff, and community members travel to The Gambia through this program. SMCM's PEACE program in The Gambia is uniquely positioned to enhance academic excellence at both the University of The Gambia and St. Mary's College of Maryland.

This newsletter informs you about and invites you to support our PEACE program. Enjoy, and contact me if I can answer any questions.

Bill Roberts, CRG

### **UTG Exchange Students Fall 2009**

Yankuba Singhateh, the UTG public health major who studied at SMCM this fall sent this for the newsletter. "From the moment I was chosen to attend the St. Mary's College of Maryland after a rigorous selection process at the UTG, the experience was amazing. Having completed a semester-long program at SMCM,

my feeling is that of a blend of pride and trepidation. Pride, because I am returning to The Gambia after successfully completing a semester of high quality studies in America. And trepidation because I am leaving behind wonderful friends from different parts of the world, not knowing whether I will ever meet them again. Overall, I must acknowledge that it was a rare privilege to have been availed such a fruitful opportunity. I thus seize this golden window of opportunity at my disposal to thank everyone who has contributed in one way or the other towards such a colossal accomplishment. Thank you everybody.”

Sunkary Badjie was the first male student from the UTG selected to participate in the Thai Studies program at Payap University. He was part of the Thai Studies cohort with seven SMCM students in fall 2009, and met the SMCM students who took part in the Asia Connections program led by Professor Ho Nguyen.

### **UTG Exchange Students Spring 2010**

Hamidou Jawara, an economics major at the UTG, has been selected to receive the PEACE scholarship and study at SMCM during the spring semester, 2010.

Mariama Bah, a development studies major with a sociology minor, was selected to receive an SMCM/Payap U scholarship and study at Payap University during the spring semester, 2010.

### **UTG Faculty Propose Courses for SMCM Summer Session, 2010**

Twelve UTG faculty members from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds submitted proposals for six-week long courses for the 2010 summer session at SMCM. The proposals are currently under review by SMCM department chairs. Two UTG faculty members will be selected from the group and invited to offer summer courses at SMCM. Look for more information once the selection process has been completed.

### **2009 Signature Semester in The Gambia**

Ten SMCM students and PEACE professor Christy Wolovich returned from a successful fall semester in The Gambia in mid-December. The fall semester featured biology and chemistry courses that sponsored numerous weekend field trips. The group visited Niokolo Koba National Park in Senegal and learned about wildlife and conservation issues, before traveling to the World Heritage Site at Gorée Island prior to their return to the United States.

Three senior biology majors conducted field research for SMPs which they plan to finish this spring.

Professor Wolovich, a primatologist with a keen interest in *Galago senegalensis* (commonly known as the bushbaby) plans to teach for the UTG during the spring semester, 2010.

## **Other News**

College archivist Kat Ryner traveled to The Gambia this past fall semester. She visited the National Archives in Banjul, the Oral History Archives of the National Centre for Arts & Culture (NCAC) in Fajara, and the UTG library near Pipeline Road. She was the resource person at a one-day stakeholders' meeting organized by the NCAC to discuss records management and preservation. She also identified at least five potential service-learning sites for future SMCM students with an interest in African or colonial histories.

SMCM's History Honors Society raised nearly \$100 for a second straight year that will be sent to former UTG exchange student Mod Talla Ceesay (spring 2008) to help pay the school fees for a deserving Gambian high school student.

### **2010 Spring Service-Learning Semester in The Gambia**

Four SMCM students will study in The Gambia this coming spring. Anthropology major Molly Devlin plans to work with the Lord Mayor of Banjul's office, and hopes to learn more about urban community development in the nation's capital. English major Jenn Pruitt plans to focus on women's issues in The Gambia, and hopes to work with the founder of the new women's museum. Political science major Megan Knipp has an interest in environmental issues, and anthropology major Sarah Blaik is interested in the topic of food security.

MAT students Lauren Gill and Jevanina Schettini plan to join the group in late March for about six weeks. They will complete part of their student teaching requirement in Gambian schools.

### **2010 Gambia Field Study Program**

Applications for the 2010 Gambia Field Studies program are available from Bill Roberts ([wcroberts@smcm.edu](mailto:wcroberts@smcm.edu)). This summer will feature two concurrent tracks: an ethnography field program based in the College's residence at Happy Camp, and an historic archaeology field program based in the ecotourist camp at Foni, Brefet. The cost of the 8-credit, 7-week program is \$3300, excluding RT airfare and pre-departure medical costs. The deadline for applications is February 28, 2010.

### **Peace Corps, The Gambia**

Peace Corps Gambia volunteers and staff invite the SMCM community to join them and raise money for insecticide treated bed nets that will be given to poor Gambian families before the 2010 rainy season. Malaria is a major cause of morbidity and under-five mortality in The Gambia. To read more, please see: <http://www.againstmalaria.com/Fundraiser.aspx?FundRaiserID=5392>

## **PEACE program alums organize**

The UTG students who studied at SMCM or Payap University have formed an alumni association at the University of The Gambia. The association aims to promote international educational and cultural exchange in The Gambia, and to help orient newly arrived SMCM students to the country and UTG.

2009 student leader Michael Fritsch (political science major) intends to form a Wolof club at SMCM this spring.

## **Fall 2010 Signature Semester in The Gambia**

Bill Roberts will be the fall 2010 PEACE professor in The Gambia. Bill is the program director, and has over 30 years of experience in The Gambia. He plans to offer the course, "Anthropology of The Gambia: a four-field approach." Course participants will learn about The Gambia through the lenses of biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archaeology and cultural anthropology in an historical context. Two major field excursions through Gambia and Senegal will be planned. The first will be an excursion that focuses on Islam and colonialism through what is known as the Peanut Basin, with visits to Kaolack, Diourbel, Touba, Tivaouane and Thies. The second will be an excursion to the national wildlife park at Niokolo Koba in eastern Senegal.

Applications for the fall semester in The Gambia are due March 1, 2010.