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Liberian Observer Online

New Website, Blog & Journal for Liberian Scientists!

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News Section:



(l-r): Ms. Collins, Dr. Cohen, Mr. Randolph and Rappaport

By: Alaskai Moore Johnson

This week, American scientists and students launched a new online journal, The Liberian Scientist.

The journal, which is accessible at www.theliberiantimes.com, is a venue for Liberian science students and scientists to share their works with local peers and the international community.

In addition to reliable digital archives of science papers, the site features a blog, which serves as a discussion forum on science and health issues. The Liberian Scientist site also includes resources for science educators, including curriculum suggestions and discussion groups. The journal's website is an exciting new resource for aspiring Liberian academics.

The website was designed by Dr. Adam Cohen, a Harvard University Professor of Chemistry, Biology and Physics and Gillian Collins, a student at Hunter College High School.

Cohen is a former student of Asumana Jabateh Randolph, who is also Collins' current laboratory science teacher. Randolph is a Liberian who lectures in the sciences at Hunter College High School.

Inspired by Randolph's ongoing commitment to Liberian service, Cohen, Collins and Ben Rappaport visited Liberia in March in connection with the I-HELP Liberia organization. Their experiences at teaching science workshops in the country compelled them to create the online journal which, they hope, will contribute to the development of a strong and adaptable science culture in Liberia. Rappaport, who is a medical doctor and PhD candidate in the Harvard-MIT Science and Technology Program, is also a former student of Mr. Randolph.

The I-HELP Liberia organization, based in the United States, is owned and run by Randolph. The organization has donated scientific equipment to individuals and high schools around Liberia.

"We believe Liberia's sustainable post-civil war rehabilitation is contingent on a revival of science," Collins said. "Science is a mechanism for progress. It's the way we learn about the world and decide how to make it better."

Indeed, science education will prepare the Liberian population to successfully compete in local and global economies. A strong science culture may also improve the accessibility of effective healthcare and promote an environmentally sustainable approach to modernization. Research programs have the capacity to yield profitable innovations and establish Liberia as a productive member of the worldwide science community.

According to the site's developers, in order to maximize the journal's potential, it is important that the website be incorporated into classroom curriculums and mainstreamed throughout Liberian intellectual community. Collins encourages science students, teachers, and enthusiasts to "publicize the website, including the blog, as a means of supplementing classroom curriculum."

With an eye towards these ambitions, The Liberian Scientist will be governed by an editing delegation in Liberia, which coordinates regularly with a management team in the United States.

Alaskai Moore Johnson, Observer Youth Columnist and Web Assistant, has already volunteered to help spearhead the initiative on a local level. Others will be selected later to help in this process.

Science students at Hunter College High School will maintain the archives and manage the blog.

Collins said the The Liberian Scientist is already accepting submissions to be considered for publication. Papers should be the ORIGINAL work of Liberian science students, teachers, professionals, or enthusiasts.

The web journal is an exciting new tool available to the Liberian scholarly community. Collins is optimistic: "We encourage you to visit the site, contribute to the blog, and participate in Liberia's science revolution!"

Indeed, it is now the responsibility of Liberian scientists to embrace The Liberian Scientist as a mechanism for intellectual and societal progress.

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