

Science & Technology

UL Chemistry Dept. Lists Myriad Problems

As Visiting US Scientists Tour Dept., Others

By Alaskai Moore Johnson

The acting chairman of the Chemistry Department of the University of Liberia (UL), Mr. James McClain, has listed myriads of problems, ranging from lack of trained and qualified

Chemistry and Chemical Biology and of Physics and Dr. Benjamin I. Rapoport (MD) and PhD candidate, Harvard Medical School, MIT Research Laboratory of Electronics, who spent two weeks in the country, had gone to Fendell to

science education in Liberia. Mr. N'Dorbor is a Chemistry lecturer and a lab demonstrator at the UL.

Following the tour of the facilities, the men had a brief meeting with staff of the Chemistry Department, during which time the Department chair, Mr. McClain, acquainted them with myriad of problems facing his department. He said that because of the problems, other disciplines, including Environmental, Industrial and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, are not in the Department's curriculum.

"These and many more will be included as soon as there are qualified men and women to handle them," he added. On staff training or 'brush up', the Department members suggested to the men that any future training for staff be conducted on the ground, where they said more people could be trained rather than taking one or two persons for training in a foreign land.

A lecturer of Organic Chemistry, Mr. Kpakama Kromah, added: "Such training, while benefiting more persons, is also relatively less expensive."

The discussions also focused on how the Department can woo business entities which deal with Chemistry to help strengthen the Department and employ its graduates.

Dr. Cohen, who did most of the talking for him and his colleague, said: "Corporate entities always want to do things that give them more profits. One thing that can get them interested is



Group pix of the visitors, staff of the Chem. Dept. and others

to tell or convince them about what the locals, students or Department grade school by the

the development of the sciences in whatever way we can," he added.

After the meeting, the visitors met with students in two different laboratory sessions. In a Biology lab session, they extracted deoxyribonucleic (DNA) from tomatoes using local materials and they also used lime to produce electricity in a Physics lab.

These problems are not only associated with this department alone, but almost all other departments of the University. But, unarguably, the College of Science and Technology at the UL under which the Chemistry Department



The Harvard Scientists watch a senior student, Rafael Ngumbu, demonstrate a 101 Chemistry lab

can offer them."

He said that by doing these and more, they might get interested in the Department, eventually in the students, as well.

NGO's founder, who is a Liberian, Mr. Asumana Jabateh Randolph.

"Mr. Randolph immensely contributed to

"In order to achieve that kind of relationship between the University or Department and corporate entities, including the Monrovia Club Brewery, Firestone Rubber Plantation, etc, there has got to be the political will from all sides," Mr. Theophilus N'Dorbor added.

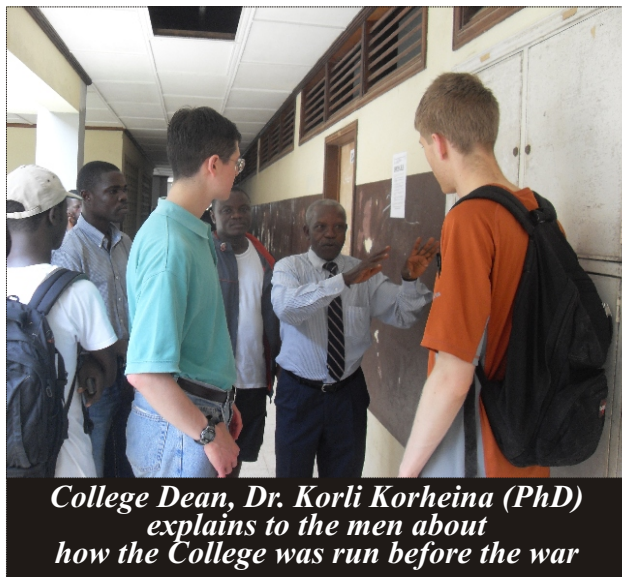
Prof. Cohen had earlier said that he and Dr. Rapoport (MD) had been inspired to come to Liberia as guests of the iHELP Liberia Project



Cohen & Rapoport listen to Chairman of the Electrical Engineering Dept.

us becoming scientists and so we decided to come to Liberia to help in

falls, is the hardest hit among the colleges.



College Dean, Dr. Korli Korheina (PhD) explains to the men about how the College was run before the war

professors, shortage of text books to lack of scientific apparatuses, among challenges facing his department.

Mr. McClain presented these challenges recently when two visiting US scientists, both from Harvard University,

tour the facility and to meet with students and staff of the Biology and Chemistry Departments.

Drs. Cohen and Rapoport were brought on the UL Science and Technology and College of Agriculture and Forestry campus by Mr.



In meeting with Dept. Staff

toured his division and other divisions, which have their offices at the UL Fendell Campus, along the road leading to Bensonville/Bentol, Montserrado County.

The scientists, Dr. Adam Ezra Cohen, Assistant Professor of

Theophilus N'Dorbor, head of Science and Technology Division at the Ministry of Education and iHELP Liberia Project, a US-based Liberian-run NGO that intends to promote and increase the knowledge on the importance of