

There was great excitement and anticipation ahead of the first ever Kuali Day in South Africa, held on March 18th, 2013 in the university town of Stellenbosch.

The Kuali Day South Africa 2013 joint hosts, Stellenbosch University, North-West University and OpenCollab (Pty) Ltd, welcomed the Kuali delegation at Cape Town International Airport on Saturday March 16th. Sunday's sightseeing tour of some of Cape Town's most beautiful sights followed, including Table Mountain and Cape Point, via Chapman's Peak Drive and historic Simonstown.



The Kuali delegation on Chapman's Peak Drive, Cape Town, South Africa. L-R: Helmie Dreyer, Martilene Orffer, Rajiv Kaushik, Attie Juyn, Keiko Takahashi, Bill Yock, Larry Symms, Barry Walsh, Rick Skeel, Bob Cook, Dan Symonds.

Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) was an appropriate venue for the inaugural event. Helmie Dreyer, IT Director at Stellenbosch University, kicked off a full program by

welcoming 90 delegates from 5 American and 7 South African universities, congratulating all for being present at this seminal occasion.

Prof Eugene Cloete, Vice-rector: Research and Innovation at Stellenbosch University, in his official welcoming address, emphasized the importance of 'Sur/Petition' (Edward de Bono) in the modern economy: going beyond competition. 'We need to create networks...create intersections, out of which new ideas are born', he said, citing Kuali as an obvious example of this, and referencing South Africa's new role in the community .

Barry Walsh, Strategic Advisor to Board of Directors at Kuali Foundation, gave the keynote speech. The 'father of Kuali' outlined the who, why, what, where and how of the Kuali Foundation and the Kuali Software 'Suite'. He explained the strategic reasons for choosing Kuali, citing the decision as one of 'buying down implementation and training costs back home'. Addressing concerns around community sourced support, he stated that the 'community itself is an outstanding provider' (there is a lot of human nature involved, to the extent that developers and analysts feel personally responsible for successful outcomes). 'Kuali software is not open source, it is community source': non-proprietary, functionally driven, where partners tender resources and benefit from the compounding returns of a pooled investment. Kuali is all about 'Sur/Petition' and collaboration. 'Leave more money for the institution's academic mission by implementing low-cost back office systems' is his stated mission. Barry also noted that US Kuali Days attendance has grown 8 times since 2005, despite shrinking travel budgets indicating increasing community involvement.

Bob Cook, CIO University of Toronto, offered a CIO's perspective on Kuali, covering the business case, the economics of Kuali vs big ERP, resourcing of community source projects, and the IT architecture implications. Bob's key operating principles are: ' No dogma! Build partnerships. Increase value!'

Rajiv Kaushik, Kuali Student Program Director, praised OpenCollab and NWU programmers as some of the best he has worked with. Nina Gelderbloem, Java Team Lead on the KS project at NWU also described the effective use of Skype for daily standups across time zones between teams in South Africa, the US West Coast and the US East Coast. The Kuali Student project 'takes sustainability very seriously' he said, in justifying the key role that OpenCollab, as Kuali Commercial Affiliate (KCA), was playing.

Keiko Takahashi, currently OIT Senior Business Analyst on the Kuali Financial System project at the University of California Irvine, worked on the first ever KFS implementation, at Strathmore University in Kenya, recounting how she consulted via Skype, with the line dropping on rainy days! All it took was one week on-site to implement, an amazing achievement in overcoming the challenges of time and distance.

Bill Yock, Director EIS University of Washington, and Jerry Neal, Senior Java Developer at IU and Lead Architect on the KRAD project, updated the audience on the Rice and CIFER projects. Jerry also spent a full two weeks in South Africa offering KRAD/Rice training to an appreciative group of developers from various HE institutions and consultants.

Then it was the turn of Martilene Orffer, CEO & MD at OpenCollab, to speak about the role of the Kuali Commercial Affiliate; KCA opportunities and responsibilities (Support, Product Knowledge, QA, Training, Documentation, Community Citizen, Sustainability); and the importance of separating software and support. Rajiv Kaushik added that the Kuali Foundation needed Commercial Affiliates so that core developers didn't need to worry about sustainability,

and could focus on the product without distraction. Barry Walsh mentioned that Kualifoundation purposely left this space blank to foster and incentivise the Commercial Affiliate Community, and therefore the foundation does not respond to any RFPs or RFIs or tenders.

Attie Juyn, Chief IT Director at North-West University, represented the South African perspective, the benefits of a Kualifoundation Community and collaboration, NWU's gains with Kualifoundation, and the history and future of Kualifoundation in South Africa.



OpenCollab partner as KCA with North-West University in South Africa. L-R: Martilene Orffer (CEO & MD, OpenCollab) Attie Juyn (IT Director, NWU), Beth Keytel (Human Resource and Marketing Manager, OpenCollab) at Cape Point Nature Reserve.

In closing, Barry Walsh addressed the question of whether South Africa could contribute to Kualifoundation, and influence product development, given the relatively small size of our institutions (compared to US universities) and weak currency. His surprise announcement that the Foundation had decided to grant NWU with Founder Member status, based on their significant contribution of expert project resources and valuable time, was greeted with warm applause, and was a fitting way to close this historic gathering.

About OpenCollab

OpenCollab, established in 1999, is a South African software development and consulting company located in Cape Town, specialising in software projects and solutions for Higher Education. We are a privately held South African company and a B-BBEE level 2 contributor.

OpenCollab joined the Kuali community in November 2011 as the first, and still the only, African Kuali Commercial Affiliate. We have participated in a number of Kuali-based projects since September 2010:

- Developing solutions with Kuali Rice
- Contributing resources to core Kuali Rice (KRAD), Kuali Student, and imminently, Kuali Mobile Enterprise
- Involved in implementing and supporting projects for Kuali Student, Kuali Rice, Kuali Mobile Enterprise and Kuali Financial System
- Growing a team of 20 staff with Kuali technical skill and product knowledge, which continues to expand
- Providing Kuali-specific training courses and related services.
- OpenCollab operational systems are effective in overcoming the challenges of distance, and scale to enable close collaboration with clients in various time zones and locations.

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