

Prof. Stella Williams visits FUTA: talks on the AWARD Fellowship and Mundus maris asbl

CEGI ST Programme Report 2

The Federal University of Technology, Akure played host to Prof Stella Williams between March 26 and 28, 2012 in a one-day seminar jointly organised by the University's Centre for Entrepreneurship and Gender Issues in Science and Technology (CEGI ST) and the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD), FUTA Chapter.

CEGI ST and OWSD-FUTA share common goals of improving gender equality in science and technology, with a view to increasing the scientific productivity and efficiency of women scientists in developing countries, promoting collaboration and communication among women scientists as well as their participation in decision-making processes at national and international levels. Great improvements have been made in this regard and women can now work and have families as well. One strategy for achieving gender equality has been the emergence of women-only opportunities such as the OWSD Awards for Young Women Scientists supported by the Elsevier Foundation, Faculty for the future fellowship by Schlumberger, L'ORÉAL-UNESCO for women in science and the AWARD fellowship.

The AWARD Fellowship is a two-year tailored fellowship designed to fast-track the careers of African women scientists and professionals delivering pro-poor agricultural research and development that benefits rural communities, especially women. AWARD currently has close to 250 fellows and 216 mentors (some mentor more than one fellow) from 11 sub-Saharan African countries: Ethiopia (15), Ghana (28), Kenya (54), Liberia (1), Malawi (20), Mozambique (14), Nigeria (55), Rwanda (7), Tanzania (15), Uganda (26) and Zambia (12). Even though Nigeria has the highest number of fellows, only one academic staff and one post-graduate student of FUTA have won the fellowship besides Dr. Mojisola Edema, who won while at the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB) which has 7 academic staff who are AWARD fellows besides students).

It was against this backdrop that CEGI ST and OWSD-FUTA organised a seminar on the AWARD Fellowship for female academic staff and graduate students. 105 participants were in attendance, 11 of whom had applied for the AWARD Fellowship 1 to 4 times between 2007 and 2011. The AWARD documentary movie, *Growing Impact* was played to the audience after which the facilitator of the seminar and Associate Director, Gender Issues, CEGI ST, Dr. Moji Edema, presented a brief introduction of Prof Stella Williams and the background to the seminar. Professor Stella Williams, former Chair of the AWARD Steering Committee summarised the scope, goals and impact of the AWARD Fellowship highlighting details of the selection criteria and procedures. She also shared briefly on her project, Mundus maris asbl, using Art to teach Science.

Participants were highly motivated and encouraged by the seminar presentations as reflected by the enthusiasm in the comments made and questions asked. It is believed that this seminar will go a long way in increasing the participation of FUTA women in the AWARD Fellowship and other gender-friendly opportunities such as the Fulbright Scholar Program of which Prof. Stella Williams was a Senior Scholar in Residence. The entire FUTA Community is grateful to AWARD for the promotional materials sent for the programme and also thanks to Prof Stella Williams for her time and dedication to women development and realisation of the AWARD goals.

Prof Stella's visit in pictures



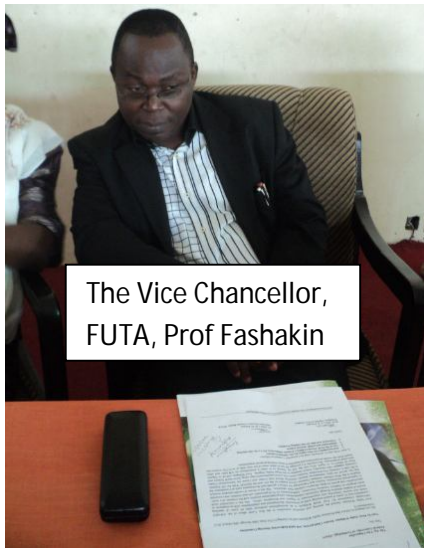
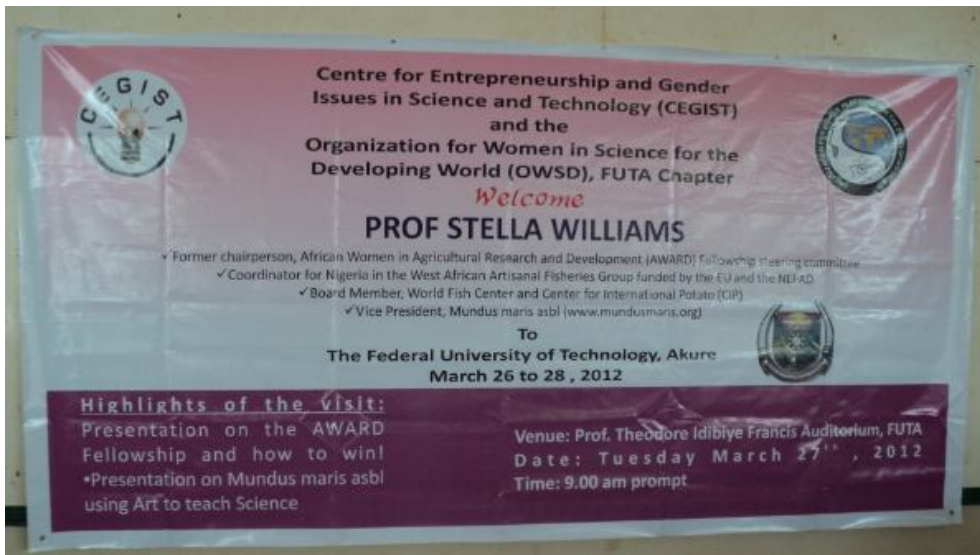
Registration of participants during the seminar



AWARD report cover used as seminar programme folder along with other AWARD promotional materials



Prof Stella and Prof Fuwape,
OWSD-FUTA President



The Vice Chancellor, FUTA, Prof Fashakin



Prof Stella, Prof Fashakin-the VC and Prof Odeyemi-Director, CEGIST



Ag. Director, Gender, Adekunle Ajasin University with Dr Edema

The VC giving his opening remarks



Dr Edema introducing Prof Stella Williams



Prof Stella presents AWARD Fellows present at the seminar to the audience



Cross-section of participants during an energiser warm up by Prof Stella





Mrs Jeff-Agboola poses with her AWARD bag gift. She decorated the venue in AWARD colors voluntarily and without charges



Mrs Ejidike shows off her AWARD bag. All 11 participants who had previously applied for AWARD and didn't win were given the promotional bags as encouragement



Two friends of Prof Stella, Prof Fagbenro (left) and Prof Daramola were invited into the planning and gave useful comments and contributions. Prof Fagbenro organised a tour of FUTA fisheries farm, Wildlife Park and other facilities for Prof Stella.

AWARD, FUTA 2012: some questions during the Q&A session

1. What are the major criteria of winning AWARD?
2. Is there any format to win AWARD?

The major criteria of winning AWARD include – (i) answer the questions as clearly and truthfully as possible; (ii) in the process of answering the questions, you need to be creative and focused. You need to ensure that your thoughts are factual and unique. Do not copy and paste ideas gleaned from others. Remember that this is a competition and therefore the winning essays are those that contain simple ideas that can be realized within a short time and these proposals are real.

The format is the way the questions are asked and therefore sequential.

3. If the research interest is in the area of using the plants to combat diseases, can such research apply for AWARD. Thank you.

No; the research must target issues related to solving food security within the 'pro-poor concepts.'

4. Does AWARD have an area of focus yearly?

Yes, AWARD focus is on 'Agricultural Research and Development in Rural Communities. The target group is women and the concept is on issues of poverty alleviation.

5. Can an applicant present a research work/proposal for an AWARD proposal?

Sure, but you must be sure that your research work will solve rural issues of African female farmers.

6. As a Food Chemist, how can I apply for the AWARD fellowship?

Yes, you can, however, I would suggest you visit AWARD website to read all about the activities that AWARD carried out in the 11 different countries where there are AWARD Fellows. This will enable you to review what you can do as a Food Chemist.

7. What can the fellowship do for the OND/HND holder?

The records show that OND/HND holders have not been considered in the activities of AWARD. This is because OND/HND is a certification that is practiced only in the U.K. and Nigeria and therefore not a Global certification.

8. Is there a particular focus/Area of interest in the fellowship per year?

There is just one focus area and this is 'Research and Development of Food Security in Rural Communities targeting Rural African Female Farmers'

9. Do you need to design a new proposal to participate in the AWARD or send an on-going proposal?

The designing of proposal to participate in the AWARD programme follows the answers to the questions asked. Therefore it is dependent on the applicant's productive abilities and dreams

10. Can a scholar who is not working in the University or any other educational institute apply?

No, this is because AWARD would like to follow-up on the researches that the fellows carry out in her institution. The critical interest is in research for development, hence, the need to have a base in an educational institution or a research institution or affiliation.