

Share Your Stories:

# Centennial College

SCHOLARS AT RISK  
NETWORK



As a part of our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Scholars at Risk is compiling stories from scholars who have been helped and campus leaders, administrators, faculty, students and friends who open their hearts and homes to them. Please share your stories with us! Send us emails, letters, pictures, audio, video or whatever you have about how you or your campus has been involved in protecting scholars and promoting academic freedom.



An Iraqi scholar visiting a class at Centennial College as part of the SAR Speaker Series

Ann Buller, President of Centennial College, first heard about Scholars at Risk at a conference on global perspectives in higher education. Hearing about Scholars at Risk's work to protect threatened scholars, something clicked. "Here we were, the only [community] college in the room. I thought to myself, 'How fantastic is this, to bring a threatened scholar to campus and let Centennial be a real safe haven for them.' We had to do it. We had to make it work."

Located in Toronto, Centennial is one of Canada's most culturally diverse post-secondary institutions, with an estimated 100 ethnic groups and over 80 languages spoken on campus. More than half of its students have a first language other than English. For President Buller, this diversity is a strength that should be reflected in all areas of the Centennial curriculum. "Global citizenship is the lynchpin of what we

teach here," says Buller. "This is our way of celebrating and honoring the incredible diversity of our student body. We teach solidarity with people no matter their background, language, or ethnicity."

With its work on behalf of threatened scholars from over 100 countries, Scholars at Risk fit right into that vision, and Centennial quickly fit into the network. Since joining in 2009, Centennial has already hosted two scholars for extended visits: a Zimbabwean professor of education and an archeologist from Gaza. A third scholar, an Iraqi scientist, visited as part of the Scholars at Risk Speaker Series. Dr. Eva Aboagye, Senior Researcher at Centennial's Institute for Global Citizenship and Equity, worked closely with each of the SAR scholars who visited Centennial. According to Aboagye, community colleges like Centennial are able to contribute in unique ways.

"For a scholar who is coming from a completely different culture, a [community] college can be a better place to integrate," says Aboagye. "There is often a greater sense of closeness, of community than there might be at other institutions."

There are also strong links to the local community beyond the campus that can produce wonderful, if sometimes surprising results. For example the Gazan archeologist who arrived at Centennial seeking a safe place to continue his research on indigenous populations in the Middle East ended up deeply interested in Canada's Aboriginal population. He incorporated this interest into his research, visiting nearby Aboriginal communities and even making a short documentary film about the Aboriginal contributions to culture and society in Western Ontario.

Centennial has gone on to promote the network among other universities and colleges in Canada, including sharing their experience hosting SAR scholars with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges in the hope of having more Canadian institutions join Scholars at Risk. President Buller explains Centennial's role in this way: "We have pretty lofty goals and with that comes the responsibility to share our vision and to push other educators to integrate global education into their curriculums, to support at-risk scholars, and to speak out in defense of free inquiry and free expression in Canada and beyond."

Thanks to Centennial's leadership, Scholars at Risk's presence in Canada is growing. Six Canadian institutions are currently members of the network and discussions are underway for the creation of a SAR-Canada section, which would join sections in the US, UK, the Netherlands, Ireland, Norway, Spain and elsewhere, all working together, one step, one scholar at a time.

## Scholar Profile:

### Clement Jumbe



Centennial College is presently hosting visiting scholar Clement Jumbe of Zimbabwe. Jumbe has more than 20 years of experience in education, including serving as the national director for UNICEF's HIV/AIDS Education Program and the national coordinator of the Commonwealth Education Fund, both in Zimbabwe. He has provided technical support to Save the Children, Oxfam and ActionAid, promoting access to quality education for marginalized children in Zimbabwe. Political strife, intimidation and lack of security for himself and his family in Zimbabwe forced Jumbe to seek refuge in Canada. He was previously supported by the Scholars at Risk Program at Massey College of the University of Toronto. Centennial has made arrangements for Jumbe to teach in its School of Advancement and School of Business, while he enrolls in a program for certification as an adult trainer in the workplace or at colleges. Thanks to Centennial and other partners in Canada, Jumbe and his family are restarting their lives in a safe environment, free of threats and intimidation.

To make a gift or learn more visit [www.scholarsatrisk.org](http://www.scholarsatrisk.org)