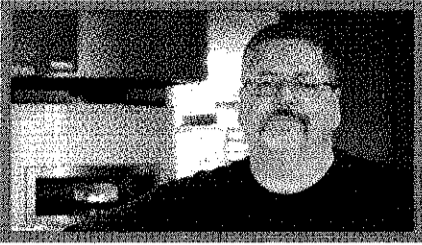


VIEWPOINT

The Business Journal welcomes guest column submissions at esiemers@bizjournals.com

Want to be heard? Take our polls and surveys in the online Business Pulse section: bizjournals.com/portland/pulse

▶ GOOD WEEK, BAD WEEK



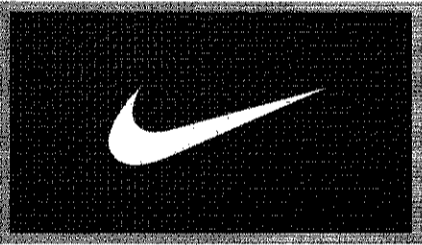
GOOD WEEK DAVID MACHADO

The chef behind a string of popular Portland restaurants is now carving up a portion of the Pearl District for his latest culinary endeavor. Machado, whose Nel Centro has long been a hit with the downtown power lunch crowd, will open the Tanner Creek Tavern at the corner of Northwest 9th Avenue and Northwest Everett Street.



BAD WEEK RAILROADS

As Columbia River Gorge residents recalled last June's Mosier derailment and fire, lawmakers began crunching new regulations on running oil trains through Oregon. Environmentalists, Native American leaders and first responders told a House Committee any new rules, since oil trains can't be banned outright, should be strict.



GOOD WEEK THE SWOOSH

Nike, once again, will dominate the NCAA men's basketball tournament. The sportswear company will outfit 40 of the teams in this year's March Madness, according to an analysis by Apex Marketing Group. That's down from 41 in 2016 and 48 in 2015. But, Adidas will only outfit 15 teams while Under Armour will outfit 12.

▶ WHAT DO YOU THINK

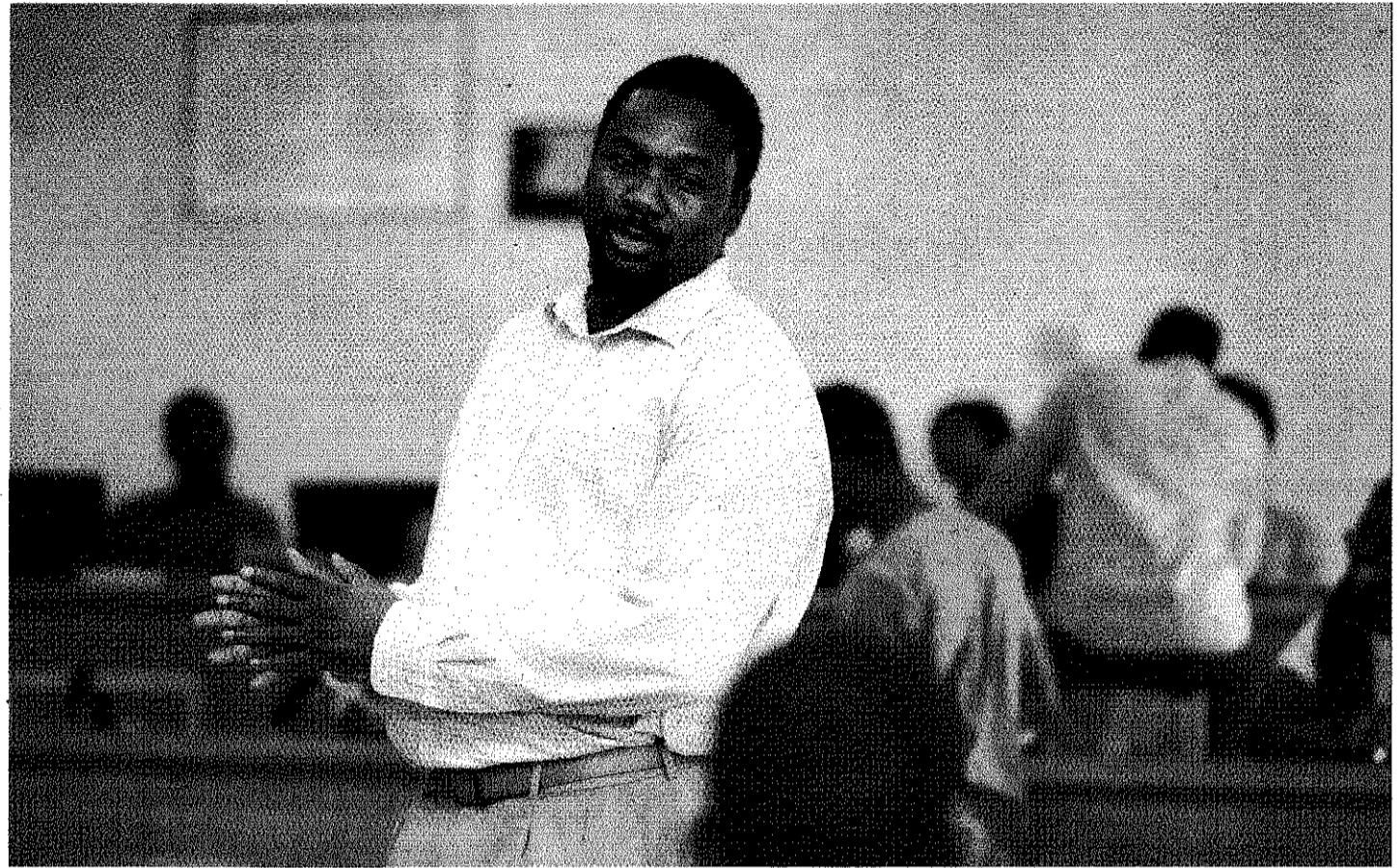
We want to hear your opinion on the issues you read about in the Business Journal. Submit letters to the editor to portland@bizjournals.com or call Managing Editor Erik Siemers at 503-219-3418 with questions.

A few guidelines: keep it brief and civil and remember to mention which news story you're writing about. No anonymous letters will be printed. All submissions become the property of the Portland Business Journal and will not be returned. Submissions may be edited and may be published or otherwise used in any medium.

GUEST VIEWPOINT

Lessons from the classroom in Ghana

Intel scientist returns to teach in his home country and brings back valuable insight for businesses, himself



COURTESY OF ASHESI UNIVERSITY

Tawfiq Musah, a research scientist at Intel in Hillsboro, returned to his native Ghana last fall and winter to teach electromagnetism at Ashesi University. "I found young minds that were curious, lively and outspoken."

BY TAWFIQ MUSAH

"What impact is your work having on people's lives?"

The student looked at me, with a hint of challenge gleaming in his eye. I was taken aback – and thrilled. This wasn't a typical question for a professor.

I shouldn't have been surprised. I had witnessed my students' unbridled curiosity and unparalleled drive for weeks. I was not new to teaching; I'd run labs and taught mathematics during my undergraduate work at Columbia University, and taught a class at Oregon State University while I pursuing my Ph.D. in electrical engineering. But I had never seen this level of enthusiasm and engagement. And I certainly did not expect to find it in my home country of Ghana.

I spent last fall and winter teaching electromagnetism to more than 50 students at Ashesi University, a unique liberal arts-style college outside of the capital city of Accra. I'd grown up in Ghana, and left for college in the U.S. over 15 years ago. For the past six years, I've worked at Intel leading research on high-speed integrated communications circuits and contributing to Portland's vibrant high-tech community.

But I've always been an educator at heart. That's why finding a one-semester volunteer teaching position – with the opportunity to shape Ashesi's first-ever electromagnetism course for its first

cohort of sophomore engineering students (The engineering program was launched last year.) – was so exciting for me. But I expected the students to be reserved and timid about asking questions, which is typical of Africa's lecture-centric higher education experiences. Instead I found young minds that were curious, lively and outspoken.

During the months I spent in Ghana, the education tables turned: My students taught me a number of valuable lessons. Several of them are worthy of sharing with members of the business and education sectors in Oregon.

First of all, get focused. My Ashesi students had clear career goals. This was so unlike any experience I've had with college sophomores in the U.S. – myself included. While I understand the American emphasis on keeping career options open, I saw firsthand at Ashesi that focus makes students more serious and driven; they selected classes more strategically and fully engaged with the coursework.

In many cases, focus also made my students more entrepreneurial. Many of my students in Ghana had goals of creating marketable products that would solve pressing problems like access to health care, energy, or food. They had the aspirations of entrepreneurs and the drive to build businesses. It's this kind of intention that will create leaders who move Ghana forward; the same kind of drive could sustain and grow the innova-

tion-based economy of Oregon.

Second, open the lines of communication. The relationship between students and professors was more dynamic and open than at any university I'd seen before – in the U.S. and Africa. Professors routinely had open-door policies, ate with students in the cafeteria, and extended classes into after-hours discussions and brainstorming. The result was a tighter and more productive bond between professors and students that would be the envy of any Oregon campus.

Finally, give back. Most of my students wanted to leverage education to contribute to their communities, and more broadly, to the development of Ghana. Of course, emerging leaders in a developing country have more numerous and severe problems to tackle than college students in Oregon. But we could all benefit from looking long and hard at our neighborhoods, cities, and countries to figure out how we can tackle big issues – whether it's homelessness, immigration, or persistent poverty.

Back in Oregon, I now approach life and work differently. Each day I think: What impact am I having? How am I making a difference? These are questions that we should all ask ourselves.

Tawfiq Musah is a research scientist at Intel.