

NYC Panel Transcription

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Aprile Age: Good evening. My name is Aprile Age. I am the Executive Director of the McNulty Foundation. I'm here with Johnny McNulty and my team and we are so pleased to host this evening. I was recalling the other day my first trip to Ghana. I was there under the auspices of making a documentary-style film about Ashesi. An international jury had just awarded Patrick our McNulty Prize for extraordinary leadership for founding the university and I think if any of you have been involved in making a film, it's primarily a learning experience and I'm always astounded by how people will open their doors to you, let you into their living rooms with cameras rolling and tell you about their hopes and fears and dreams for the future.

So, one afternoon we were crowded into the living room of a young woman named Afwa Biney. Afwa's mother was very emotional - she told us how she was the primary caregiver for the family. Her husband was employed with the Roads Department but hadn't been paid in a year. She and her husband hadn't had the chance to go to college but despite these difficult circumstances, she was determined that her children would. So, there is a funny circumstance where Afwa's mother every day passes by this place Ashesi and she notices something about the students - they seemed different, they seemed confident, they seemed engaged. It was something she wanted for her own children.

And she told us that one day she asked the gardener for the university, "What's going on here? What do you think about this?" And he enthusiastically told her, "you should go into the Admissions Office. You should enquire - they have scholarships for students with need." So of course, Afwa won acceptance, she got a significant scholarship, and when we interviewed her she was this electric young woman, top of her class, she was a student leader. She was really transformed already by her experience at Ashesi. And her family's prospects were transformed.

So most of you probably already know Patrick and Ashesi but I want to give you a few key facts before we get started. Ashesi is a private non-profit university in Ghana with a 4-year bachelor's program. They offer degrees in business administration, management information, computer science, electronic engineering, computer engineering, and mechanical engineering. The curriculum is rooted in entrepreneurship, ethics, critical thinking, and that means during their time on campus, students are transformed into independent, questioning, self-motivated, moral leaders ready to deal with the challenges of tomorrow. 100% of graduates receive job offers and 90% stay in Africa.

So, what about Afwa? So, I called Ashesi's Alumni Office and got Afwa's number, and, miracle of miracles, I had her on the phone yesterday. And she updated me on the beautiful consequences of her mother's intuition. She was recruited out of Ashesi into a startup run by Harvard Business School grads. She was chosen for her entrepreneurial mindset and her clear ethics. The startup grew from 40 to 60 people and was acquired. The dream, right? Afwa won a fellowship to Oxford because of her interest in ethics in corporate government. Just two weeks ago she got her MBA from Oxford and very importantly she is packing to come back to Ghana to start her own enterprise. So, I was so excited that I got this beautiful ending to the story I was going to tell. And then I

realized any Ashesi student would have this ending. There are just countless inspiring stories of these students.

Ashesi is a place that sees the potential in young people like Afwa to transform the continent. The model is working, and Patrick has been recognized with the MacArthur Grant, recently with the WISE Prize and we're just so proud that we saw that early potential and gave him our prize. We have been an engaged and committed funder ever since and it's easy to fund Ashesi because of the level of integrity in every aspect of the university.

So, all of you are here tonight to talk about ethical entrepreneurial education and the huge difference it can make in the African landscape. This is the meaty topic of our panel. So, I want to introduce you to our moderator this evening, Nina Marini, who has an even longer history with Patrick. Nina lives and works in Seattle; she's Director of Corporate Business Strategy at Microsoft. Back in 1999 at Berkeley, she and Patrick were pursuing their MBAs. They first met doing a school assignment - a feasibility study for what would become Ashesi University. Like how many people get to do a study that turns into with this - it's amazing. She's been a constant presence in the university ever since. Please welcome Nina and our panel for this evening.

Nina Marini: Professor Phillip Clay served as Chancellor of MIT from 2001 to 2011. He has also held other leadership positions at MIT, including head of its department of urban studies and planning where he's been a faculty member since 1976 and continues to teach today. Professor Clay is widely known for his work in US housing policy and urban development. Also growing out of his work on MIT's international strategies, he's interested in the increasing role that higher education can play in national development strategies of less developed countries. In his TEDx Talk entitled *Advancing African Colleges: A Fierce Urgency*, Professor Clay argues that the transformation of the African continent is hinged on quality tertiary education. So, a wonderful voice to have in our panel today. Professor Clay is also active on numerous foundation and nonprofit boards, including the Community Builders, the Kresge Foundation, The MacArthur Foundation, and Aga Khan University. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and holds a doctorate from MIT.

Next, we have Yawa Hansen-Quao, who is an Ashesi alumna and Founder of Leading Ladies Network as well as co-founder of Impact Hub Africa. Through these organizations, Yawa works to promote the expansion of woman-led and woman-owned businesses that have high growth potential through education, networking, mentoring, exposure to investment resources and so forth. Yawa also serves as a leadership consultant to UN Women, helping to develop leadership curricula to enhance the capacity of women leaders in East and Southern Africa. She serves on the board of Global Shapers and Ashesi University. Yawa has a master's degree in gender, peace and security from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center and an undergraduate degree in Business Administration from Ashesi University.

And finally, Dr. Patrick Awuah is the Founder and President of Ashesi University. Through his work there, Patrick aims to contribute to an African Renaissance by educating ethical, entrepreneurial leaders. Before founding Ashesi, Patrick worked as a Program Manager for Microsoft where he gained a reputation for bringing difficult projects to completion through focus and persistence, which we still see today. He holds bachelor's degrees in engineering and economics from Swarthmore College, an MBA from Berkeley's Haas School of Business, and honorary doctorates from Swarthmore College and Babson College.

So, with that, I'd like to dive into our topic of the day, which of course is focused on the role of ethics, entrepreneurship, and leadership in African higher education. Why this topic and why is it important today? Well, one of the things that we see today is that Africa is experiencing an explosion in population. Largely thanks to improved healthcare and infant survival rates and so forth, which is all positive but creates its own pressures. The population is projected to double to 2.4 billion by 2050 and potentially up to 4.2 billion by 2100. And of course, that projection can change drastically according to fertility rates and so forth. But the pressures are there. We are seeing it in things like immigration, and even as immigration is happening and education is increasing we are still seeing a lot of brain drain off the continent. So, for that reason, we feel that these trends present an urgent need to nurture a very strong pool of leaders and talent on the continent for people to be able to chart the future course of Africa locally.

So, with that, I'd like to start with a question generally for the whole panel about what you see as the core leadership traits that are needed in Africa today, and maybe talk a little bit about what you see as being the most effective way to cultivate those skills. Let's start with Professor Clay.

Professor Clay: Thank you very much. I'm honored to be here. I want to first say that the urgency about higher education is a relatively new development. The last 25 years or so. And one of the things that is critically important to understand about the African continent is that we, and when I say we I mean the West - the US, Canada, Europe, major institutions like the World Bank - made the decision in the 1980s to instruct African countries in exchange for aid. That they should invest in roads, bridges and harbors, and *not* education. And specifically, not higher education. The consequence of that was that many of the institutions that were left over from the colonial period, having made some progress in the 60s and 70s, all of the sudden became degraded institutions.

And it's been a struggle since then to establish higher education as a priority. At the very same time that this development occurred, Asian countries, Europe and the US redoubled their investment in higher education. I recall seeing with South Korea that came into the same period, say the 1960s, as a very underdeveloped country move from the period where their products were absent from the West to leading the West. So, if you go out to look at a refrigerator you are likely to see Samsung. If you go to buy a car you are likely to see Hyundai. If you go to buy any advanced manufactured product, Koreans would be leaders. Now how did they get there? And this is where the title of this panel is so important. They took entrepreneurship seriously. Ethics in the sense that we want to push the entire society honestly along a path to develop the country. And they did. They went from zero to world leadership. They went from being an underdeveloped country to G20 country in 20 years. There's a longer period, but the last 20 years have been key.

Now I emphasize entrepreneurship because the French root for that word means *to undertake*. And the reason I think that this is an important concept for higher education in Africa is that it is entrepreneurship that is going to turn the continent around. Not just in the sense that young people will graduate and start businesses. That is great. But there also has to be entrepreneurship in every dimension related to economic development and there is no economic development in the world today that does not rely heavily on higher education. There just is none. So that's the urgency, and that's why this panel is so important.

Nina Marini: When you think about the work you do with young women, what are the types of skills in leadership that you see are needed, and pointedly, how difficult is that? What are some ways you find effective in cultivating leadership?

Yawa Hansen-Quao: First of all, hello everyone, and thank you for the question. I think that as I reflect on my Ashesi experience and coming to Ashesi as part of the second batch of students that Ashesi accepted, I started to think about what drew me to want to study at Ashesi. And it might sound corny, but it was this one ad that Ashesi had run in the newspaper. And it said, “Do you believe in excellence? At Ashesi, we do.” And it was important to me because at the time I started to contemplate “who am I” and “what role will I play in this world?” I grew up in a really religious Christian family; I was contemplating whether the faith I had was my own or whether it was an imposition from my parents. I had a bit of conflict with my parents as well. I was trying to find my way. My parents had also lived here in the US for several years because my father was a politician fleeing the military coup that happened in Ghana in the early 80s. So, I also had this multicultural tension in me. When we lived in America as an immigrant family, people knew that we weren’t from here from the sound of our names or the accents. Maybe not so much us kids, but our parents’ accents. And then we go back to Ghana and it’s clear we don’t fit in there. So, I hear about Ashesi at this point of great conflict in my personal life and this call to excellence sounded very appealing to me.

So, this friend of mine from Achimota School, which is where I went to secondary school, said we’re going to come out and see this university, and the rest, as they say, is history. But I point to that because I, at that time hearing about Ashesi at 18 or 19 years-old, I find that there is a hunger among young Africans for a kind of direction. I think there is also a disappointment in our leaders that we’ve been sold lies or there is a lot of disappointment in that what we’d hoped we’d be seeing for development in our nation is not being seen. And I think Ashesi speaks to that in very strong ways. I think that to take young adults who are transitioning into adulthood at a time when they’re forming their lasting values and trying to make sense of their contribution to the world, and to challenge them with the core question, “what is a good society?” and ask us to contemplate how to contribute to that, was for me the turnaround.

My family was going through a horrific time when I heard about Ashesi, and I knew I wanted to come. And the question of how we were going to afford Ashesi was unanswered. And I recall my father had just been diagnosed with cancer and was in the hospital. I was responsible for my younger siblings. It was a horrible time. And I bring this up because, often when we talk about ethics, we sometimes inadvertently assume that ethics is a conversation that is had by people who are well-off and well-to-do, and we kind of disregard the role poverty can play in warping a person’s sense of right and wrong. And I wondered whether I should tell the story, but I will anyway because I asked my brother and he said it was okay.

So, at the time I was accepted to Ashesi, things were financially horrible for our family. Things got so bad that our electricity had been turned off, we had no phone, we had no running water at home. We were like most rural communities - we had to go fetch our water to bathe and cook and all that. And for families like ours that had lived abroad, that was kind of shameful because we did know a better life. And I’m not saying that we were balling or very wealthy when we lived here, but at least all our needs were met.

And we're in this situation: It's me, four younger siblings, a parent, our breadwinner, in the hospital. How does one provide for younger siblings? I am a young adult, I am being propositioned by men who are older, well-to-do, asking me to sell my body for what we need. How do you say no to that? How do you tell a woman or a young girl in that dire need to make the ethical choice to say no to exchanging her body for favors if you're not providing her needs? So, there's this dilemma and intention that I experience at this time when I go to Ashesi and enter this community that talked about excellence, that talked about morality, and of course by then my sense of morality came from my Christian faith. But I felt like this question, "What is a good society", was a question that anyone could get behind regardless of what your religious or upbringing was.

And so, I recall you know we were having this issue where we four younger siblings come back from school on a daily basis, we don't have electricity on to do our homework and one of my brother's friends did an apprenticeship at the electricity company and learned how to do an illegal connection. You see where this is going, right? So, the first night our lights are on, and we're not paying for it. And I was struck because, I'm not sure it would have bothered me if we weren't having these conversations about "What's a good society" and "What's my role in it?" And one would have thought we can rationalize this because we're going through a tough time. We can rationalize the theft of electricity from the public grid because anyone who hears this sob story of ours will understand that we are in need and we're just doing what we need to do. And I think often times we can rationalize any behavior in really simplistic terms like that. But I think that, for me, ethics really is making a decision to live, to work under the glimmer of honest light.

So, I told my brother, "Do you remember what happened?" I said, "We need to turn these lights off, we're not paying for it." I invoked the name of our father, who we were all kind of fearful of, that "what would daddy think if he saw us doing this kind of thing?" But then, also, who do we want to be? That it's not even just about right now. Are we making decisions on a daily basis that if we're ethical in small choices, when it matters the most, that maybe one day if we're really important people with really important jobs, we will have a track record of making those choices. And we decided that, you know what, we'll just go buy some candles and we'll light them. It won't be ideal, but we'll get our work done. I decided that I'll stay on campus until I do all my homework because that's the choice to live and work in and operate under the glimmer of honest light. And I think for anyone who lives in Africa there's a lot to be discouraged about, there's a lot that could be better. But it's communities like Ashesi that create environments where you can start to contemplate this super important question, "what's a good society?" and understanding that it only gets that way if you play your part.

So, to your question about what traits: I think it's the trait of integrity. It's about choosing who you are and acting regardless of who's watching and who can bring you into account to punish you, but making choices to live, to work under the glimmer of honest light.

Nina Marini: Thank you. So that's very foundational, very fundamental. So just to put a tweak on the question: Patrick as you're thinking about leadership skills and the types of things that you want to arm Ashesi graduates with, do you see any shifts with what's needed on the continent as we're going through all these rapid technology changes, and maybe societal changes? What kind of trends do you see?

Patrick Awuah: Well, there hasn't been a particularly big change. Just on Monday, I had a conversation with an economist who has been working the last 40 years on helping African

governments set up the policies and structure their economies and so on. And he's in my office and he says, "I've been working at this for 40 years and it's tough going." And so, I asked him, "What's been missing? What do we need?" And he just sort of went quiet for a while, and then he looks up at me and says, "We've been missing institutions like Ashesi. The work that you do here is so fundamental to what we've needed on this continent these 40-plus years I've been working." And the things that he was describing, the things he described as necessary - ethics, critical thinking, the expectation that problems will be solved, and that problems should be solved for the most people as opposed to just for self and for immediate family, entrepreneurship, courage - just educating people to have courage, to tackle difficult problems, and to have the capabilities to solve those problems, is really fundamental for any society.

Of course, then he turned around and said, "You know you really have to replicate and you've got to go to Ethiopia and here and here and here." But that is to say that what he was describing to me just on Monday - it's the same set of things that we set out to do when we were starting Ashesi. That we need to be educating leaders who are entrepreneurial, who are ethical, who have empathy, who have a real sense of responsibility not just for themselves but for their society and that if we're able to do this and if we're able to get other universities along, because we can't do it all by ourselves, then you make a sea change in the future.

Phillip Clay: One of the things that a number of foundations did between 2000-2010 was to embrace the challenge of addressing higher education in Africa. There were about 8 foundations over that 10-year period. They made grants totaling about \$400 million to schools in Africa. And when I learned about this, because right at that point of that program ending I joined the board of the Kresge Foundation, which is one of the foundations that had made grants. And I was on the board of the Mastercard Foundation that was starting up. So, the question I had was, why did not this huge injection of funding, why was it not more transformative? And the issue - I can't comment on the ethics part - but the entrepreneurship part was a clear missing element. What typically happened that caused the failure - one part of the failure I blame on the foundations - and the other part of the failure I blame on their grantees in Africa.

What the foundations failed to do was express an expectation of what transformation would be about. They allowed each of the foundations to make grants sort of willy-nilly without a strategy either on the part of the foundations as a group or the individual institutions. So the money was - I don't want to suggest it was sort of thrown out there - but sort of it was just thrown out there. What was missing on the African side was the fact that for 10 years there was a steady flow of money that they had considerable flexibility on how to use. And I say considerable because it wasn't total. For example, one of the foundations focused on women education for girls. Well that doesn't mean that boys don't get educated, it just means you have resources that would allow you to make some changes in your program that would in the first instance attract and support girls but would make the institutions a better place.

What evaluations found was that there was *not* a strategic uptake of the money and *not* a strategic allocation. So the challenge is how do we make sure that the next tranche of funds would have a more productive outcome.

Nina Marini: I have a follow-up question with the work you've done with the Mastercard Foundation. The Mastercard Foundation has a program in Africa for secondary and tertiary education specifically designed to provide access for people who are economically disadvantaged.

So [people who] really wouldn't have the chance for that kind of education. You partner with a lot of different institutions to do that. Could you talk a little bit about your experiences and specifically how to identify and work with institutions, what to look for to make that successful?

Phillip Clay: It's very difficult to give money away. I remember having a discussion right here in New York. The board met here in New York and some of the first decisions we had to make were: What's the geographic focus and what would be the programmatic focus. Programmatic focus was easy: education and workforce development. The geographic focus was Africa. There was not a dissent about that. But the question was how can we be different? How can we bring progress when there was none? And one of the first people we met was James Wonge, who was President of Equity Bank in Kenya and he had started a program called Wings to Fly, which is about as entrepreneurial as you can get.

He basically said "I run a bank all over Kenya. I want it to be all over East Africa and beyond. But I also want to train and to support the education of the next generation of leaders. So he's said "Since I have all of these banks around Kenya and my people are well-educated and highly motivated to promote education, I'm going to use the branch banks as outreach for young people to come to the schools participating in Wings to Fly." So his generosity and his bank's generosity became the entrepreneurial sea that grew into the program you ask about. And it's been repeated in various ways in other places, but the challenge was to find other partners in Africa that would show such generosity and ethics. He was very clear, very above board, ads were in the paper. You know kids came, they were counseled by people who had a genuine interest in finding young people on whom they could put these wings to fly.

Nina Marini: We've also talked a little bit about existing universities and the need for innovation - a lot of new efforts and entrepreneurialism. Maybe you can talk a little bit Patrick, Phillip or Yawa, around what it takes to work with existing universities. There is a lot of capacity there. How can they be influenced to made more entrepreneurial or at least helping others to be more entrepreneurial.

Patrick Awuah: So for us, we've sort of operated with this theory that what we need to do is to demonstrate a certain kind of success in Ghana with faculty who look just like the faculty at other universities, with students will look just like the students at other universities. and if we're able to demonstrate that in the same context we can educate people with a certain set of characteristics, that is a demonstration to other universities that they can too. So that's the first thing that we're focused on. The second thing is to be very open about sharing what we're doing with any university that wants to know what we're up to, because that kind of openness and sharing is certainly going to benefit the society. They'll learn something from it and as they engage with us they'll also hopefully share things with us that we might not be so strong in. And all boats rise. And so we feel that what needs to happen in Africa is that we need to have a network of institutions that are equally committed to excellence, that are equally committed to sharing and learning from each other, and if we can achieve that then we will make a big change. So that's our approach as a new entrant.

Phillip Clay: I've been one who shares the view with Patrick that we do need to create models of excellence. It's very hard if you are in an existing institution. Typically an institution that's vastly under-resourced. It's very difficult to make a turn-around. That is to say, next year we are going to be excellent. Well, next year you have the same lab or lack of lab you have this year. You have the same faculty that is poorly paid. You have the same huge classes. You have the same

infrastructure, and you have a government that says next year you have to take twice as many students. Now from my point of view that is not an environment in which you can create excellence. So I've shared the view Patrick has that we need to share these models of excellence around Africa and we do need for them to share and Africa needs to be networked with institutions around the world.

There is resistance to that. There is resistance because, and I'm not one who can best describe it, but if you are an existing institution and somebody arrives in-country with a bag of money they believe that they need it and should get it. I agree they need it, but I'm not sure that the best use of that resource is to very marginally support an existing institution. The other argument I hear is that these new institutions like Ashesi are elite institutions and that is bad. They are elite institutions in the sense that a small number of students - 870 - are given a set academic resources that are far superior to what the other 99% of students gets. The obligation of a place like Ashesi is to stick with their model of excellence and to diffuse their impact, not just with the students they train, but sharing their expertise and insights with other institutions.

I'm afraid that we have not yet resolved this issue of elitism vs non-elite institutions. Massification as opposed to building quality, and that I think is a barrier to improving higher education on the continent. It's very hard to put a little bit in a very large weak institution, and expect of the institution. It doesn't work at institutions in the US, and I don't think it's going to work at institutions in Africa.

Nina Marini: I think I'd like to pivot a little bit and talk about as you create these types of new leaders who are entrepreneurial, how do you keep them? How do you have them stay and work on the continent in Africa, because it's very easy for them to move out and do things outside of Africa.

Yawa Hansen-Quao: I could speak to that. If I could build up on your previous question, I think another really interesting way that we see impact is how students who graduate from Ashesi do when we go into the world of work. It can be challenging though. Often times, like Aprile said, a lot of Ashesi students before they graduate they have job offers. 100% of our graduates within 3 months usually have a job offer and oftentimes within a very short period of time because we have a really good skill set technology-wise. Ashesi students tend to be more critical thinkers so Ashesi students tend to rise and move quickly in companies. I think in many ways we are influenced by how well we do in the world of work. And then we also have friends who go to other universities and so there's some just kind of informal sharing that happens there and it's been impressive to see over the past couple of years the number of schools that have kind of borrowed or copied, you know they say imitation is a form of flattery, so a lot of schools have also borrowed elements of our program, specifically like the honor code that Ashesi instituted a few years ago. So I think that's a really compelling way that we also seem to be influencing other institutions through the networks that we are connected to.

Your current question has to do with keeping the best and brightest in Africa. You know my view on that is part of what I liked about my Ashesi experience. You couldn't graduate Ashesi without doing the Africana program. And the Africana courses - there a bouquet of them that you could choose from. So I for instance took a course in traditional medicine. So we had a professor who took us through ancient herbal remedies and how you put them to use and how fascinating! We had some of them that were core courses like African Philosophical Thought, or Conflict in Africa.

And I think the way the courses, that part our academic curriculum was structured, burdened us with this sense of responsibility. And all of the stuff you're hearing and coming to know: What are you going to do about it? And I think that in a very indirect way, that compelled many of us to start to think, "Wait, I don't want to go abroad. I want to stay here." So, I think being presented with that fundamental question, 'What is the good society?', to expand that question: 'What does a good Africa look like?' as we are all hoping or working toward an African Renaissance. What will that look like and what role will you play in it? It puts that burden of responsibility on everybody that's in the Ashesi environment to start thinking critically about maintaining stronger roots within the continent.

I think another practical way that a lot of graduates will remain in Africa is if the opportunities exist. Unfortunately, depending on the sectors that you want to specialize in, to get the best trajectory to get into the economic bracket that you want to get into, you may have to look abroad. And I'm not sure it's entirely bad that Africans go abroad. I think that there is a usefulness. I feel very strongly that multicultural understanding makes you a better leader. So I think it's useful and helpful or maybe should be mandated in a way that there are more experiences internationally. I think travel or international experiences have a way of broadening your points of view, helping you to affirm or debunk ideas that you've held so dearly. It increases your tolerance levels and I think you know over the years Ashesi has built a really excellent exchange programs with different universities. I had the opportunity to study at the American University in Rome Italy for a semester and that was my first time being abroad by myself without family. It was an opening. It was how in many ways I came of age having to make it, quote on quote, in an environment that I didn't even know. I didn't know the language and so that built a different skill set in me that I'm not sure I could have picked up if I remained in the bubble of Ghana.

I think when I look at the story of my parents for instance, when we were teenagers they made the decision that we come from a place that's worth remembering and worth being involved in and doing something about and so although we were teenagers and all we knew at that time was life in America, they made a conscious effort to make sure we go back to the continent. And I think because they felt that compelling pull that they needed to build the continent. So I think creating an environment where young people understand the responsibility that they have to the continent while also not chastising them for the desire to get some around-the-world experiences - that is a good combination.

Nina Marini: Patrick: From the start you had this vision of educating ethical, entrepreneurial leaders. Along the way has there been anything that you found unexpected in terms of the contributions that students, staff, or faculty provided to that vision?

Patrick Awuah: Well one thing that I hoped for, that I wasn't sure we would get, was that students would take on the mission as their own and that they will take on ownership for the culture of the institution. And when we started the conversation actually Yawa was student government president at the time we started the conversation about the Honor code and she got a lot of flak initially about it. But it was really heartwarming to see students take on a difficult question. I mean the question about whether a student is going to promise to be ethical themselves is not as difficult a question as the question about will you hold your colleagues accountable if they behave in unethical ways. This was a very difficult thing for young people to do and so it was it was great to see them take that on and actually come up with what I thought was phenomenal initiative at Ashesi.

The other thing is that our students have really tried to do some really impressive things. It's one thing to invite students from a high school where they're just been surrounded by rote. They've sort of been surrounded by people telling them that you cannot invent. And I'm not kidding. I remember when we were starting our engineering program and one of our goals was to educate people who invent and innovate, that there were professors in Ghana telling us that we could not achieve this and this was also even inappropriate goal to set. That we should educate people to use things that have been invented overseas.

And then to see a student who has written some code and has built an AI that is predicting with 60% accuracy whether a song is going to be a hit and is working to make accuracy rise to 80% and is now having a conversation with me about how do I take that technology and modify it to help with risk assessment in banks in Ghana - this is a very bold approach. You say of course we can build new technologies in our contexts for what we need. That it's been really great to see and as students do those types of things and their colleagues from other universities see, and as new students entering Ashesi see, that's how you build momentum. You change the expectations of everybody about what we can accomplish.

Nina Marini: I want to circle back to you Yawa. We hear about these exciting opportunities in the way that Ashesi students are challenged to break out of the norms against traditional views. Can you talk about your experience transitioning out of Ashesi into the real-world of work and challenges or lessons you learned in that process?

Yawa Hansen-Quao: Well when you're at Ashesi for 4 years contemplating these philosophical questions truly: "What is the good society?", you're imbibing leadership, you have an honor code that everyone lives up to, everyone's inspiring. And then you go into the world of work and no one values any of this. It's a culture shock. I was lucky that where I worked wasn't entirely far from Ashesi so I was on campus a lot talking with professors about stuff I was facing in the office or how they thought I should react to stuff, and the curse of being competent. The Ashesi Education prepared us inadvertently for being dedicated competent Worker Bees in the offices that we go to. And that would also get us flack with other employees who might have been there longer than you, but may not be getting the opportunities that you're getting because they're not as productive as you are. And even the emotional intelligence of how to deal with that.

And I think these conversations helped us to innovate a bit about how to prepare Ashesi graduates for transitioning into the workplace. We developed courses on business protocol because Ashesi students were spoiled for choice, oftentimes with two or three offers. How to maintain the relationship with companies that are potential employers even if you aren't accepting to work from them. There are many lessons along the way for us and I think one of the great outcomes of some of this is the Giving Voice to Values curriculum that all Ashesi students go through before they graduate. That curriculum really helps you to flex the mental muscle ahead of time about specific ethical situations you may face so that you can, outside of the heat of the moment, start thinking about what are some of the strategies you could use to deal with those situations. And it's especially useful because as you go into your first job and you were not in a senior role and you're seeing things happen that aren't right, and you have to make the decision or the determination of "Do I speak up?" "To whom should I speak?" "Is this the mountain I want to die on if it will result in me losing the job?" All of these things that kind of brought all of the philosophical conversations that we had been having over the four years into some practical reality.

And it was useful as an alumni body to start engaging current students about what we were seeing. To say, “For those of you in the financial services sector, you may see this, you may see that. Here’s what I did in this company that seemed to help, and here’s strategies that you can use to help.” So building on the strengths of others in the community who have already tread that pathway. But I felt particularly proud about how, as a result of some of these things, that Ashesi Career Services Department strengthened the kind of training they would do for students graduating. And then also the Giving Voice to Values curriculum, which really helped you to think ahead of time even before you're in that situation so you have a really great framework within which to choose your actions.

Nina Marini: We’ll do one more question, and then audience, please prepare your questions because we have time for Q&A. Here in the US the higher education landscape is rapidly changing. Everything from online courses, people questioning the 4-year degree program, some of the latest technology advances happening around AI, things that will fundamentally change how we live, work, and study. What are the trends that you see, and what are you most excited about?

Phillip Clay: There are a lot of developments, and some of them will have significant impact well beyond the United States. Online education I firmly believe is something of great value. But online education is a tool, it's *not* education. Education comes when there is a pedagogy for conveying information and how to use it. And there are people in the United States, sadly some of our legislators, who believe that somehow if they get everybody sitting in their parents’ basements on a couch, they won’t have to build dormitories or labs. That’s not going to happen. And indeed the places where online education is pursued as though it were education, are the very places the students are being miseducated or not educated. Education online is a very powerful tool used in conjunction with other forms of pedagogy and I hope that message gets carried to Africa and beyond.

Artificial intelligence is a significant development, and it poses some risk for Africa. And let me just illustrate one point. If you are an international or global firm doing business in Africa, you now have the choice of hiring Africans or bringing people from outside of Africa do to the work. African governments are rightly expecting more uptake of African talent, and are placing restrictions on immigration. Artificial intelligence says to companies, “We don’t have to worry as much as we thought we could, because we could essentially do in London what it is we used to do in Accra. And we don't have to have to hire Africans and we don't have to send British professionals to Africa. We can simply, using technology, get the professional work done in London. But that's bad news for Africans who might be candidates for those jobs and it reinforces a great reluctance to invest in institutions in higher education because companies now have less motivation to do it. They don't feel the urgency that they might have felt five years ago, and that removes a valuable stakeholder from the calculus that we are counting on. So those are just two areas.

Excitement, I think is the many examples of very innovative new approaches to education in African institutions. There are many of them. I have written a paper about higher education in Africa that goes into a lot of criticism, but there is a long section which outlines very promising initiatives. And I think that’s what I’m most excited about.

Nina Marini: Thank you very much. We’d like to open it up to questions.

Audience Member 1: Just a few comments. Just to congratulate Patrick. I'm a professor of economics at NYU, and I actually taught during the first two cohorts of Ashesi and Yawa was my economics student, so great to have you. I just wanted to compliment Ashesi in a number of ways that perhaps were mentioned here. My alma mater is University of Ghana, and I know University of Ghana and Ashesi are in public always sort of squabbling, but you've changed the mentality there. So at University of Ghana, we had the British system and if you think academia in New York or America is lengthy, wait until you go to the British system in Africa. So you've been changing that - that's great.

The other thing that wasn't mentioned was one of the things Ashesi did Ghana was that it allowed private universities to come up on board. Professor Clay you mentioned Korea. One of the things Korea did was to allow lots of private universities. At the time when Patrick was thinking of Ashesi, the whole country just said, "Private - that has to be bad." So you just sort of like broke that thing, and as you know the floodgates have been opened and there's been a lot private universities opened. So congratulations on that.

One thing also I wanted to mention because it gets us into trouble and it's part of the reason why I think we didn't want private universities to begin with. So this is the question of brain drain, and I usually hear the brain drain in the negative. And so if you just imagine an African in Africa and instead of staying in Africa, goes to Swarthmore University for an education - that's bad, right? And then after that goes to Microsoft to work there. That's really bad, right? And then goes to Berkeley Haas Business School - that's awful. We should kill that person, right? That man would not be alive if you did that. So we have to remember that the brain drain is not really Africans leaving. It's Africans circulating. It's a good thing. There's nothing bad about that, ok? All of us here because of the brain drain. We are all mixing around.

And I like to throw this in for everybody. Did you know that the first man human being is from Africa? So all you guys are brain drainers, okay? Whether you like it or not. It's ok. So I just wanted to thank Ashesi, thank all of you. Yawa I am so proud of you. It's a really fine institution. And all of you who are here: Volunteer, teach there if you can, donate if you can. It's just a wonderful institution. Thank you.

Jim Gokwe: Hello, I have a question. My name is Jim Gokweh. I'm from the Democratic Republic of Congo. I'm a volunteer at the Malai School for Girls in Congo and I had a question for you guys about scale. So basically it seems like every African country really needs like 10 Ashesis. So what can we do to get there? And you know that Africans leapfrog. Africans leapfrogged landlines straight to cell phones. So is there a way for us to leapfrog traditional four-year institutions to catch up? And if so, what are your solutions to getting there?

Patrick Awuah: So that's a big question. Let's talk about leapfrogging with mobile telephones. We hear this a lot and in a way it's correct, and in a way it's wrong. So yes we didn't do landlines and we jumped to cell phones, but we found that we had to start laying fiber all throughout our countries even for the cell phone networks to be at high efficiency. But the bigger question about leapfrogging on that particular technology is that if you look at mobile telephones, there's a huge value chain that involves the design of the handsets, the manufacturer of the handsets, the coding, the design and manufacture of the infrastructure, the cell towers and radio equipment and all of that. And Africa didn't leapfrog that. Much of that value chain was captured in the West and in Asia. So designed in the West, manufactured in Asia. And they did so because China and Korea

and Japan did the basic blocking and tackling of educating people who could design and build those devices - not just educate them to use it. And they did them using education models in labs, in classrooms, and so on. And so there's a part of me that feels that is really important that we not try to take shortcuts.

Having said that, there is new technology that enables us to move even more quickly even in the lab setting. 3D printing, for example, has made it possible for our students at Ashesi to prototype very quickly. If you want to build a robot it is so much easier now with a 3D printer and a computer than it was just you know five, ten years ago. But it doesn't mean that we don't have laboratories. We have to have that. We have to have students doing the real work. So Professor Clay just talked about the \$400 million spent over a 10 year period in higher education in Africa. If those \$400 million dollars had been spent in building the same kind of facilities that China was building in their universities, that Korea was building in their universities, we would have made so much progress.

So my advice is: We have to not think that there are shortcuts here. We have to do the work. That's my answer. Online helps us. I think online is a brilliant way to keep people learning throughout their lives. You have to teach people have to learn. I think the University of the Future is going to be an expansion of the universities are today. You'll do your 4 years, you'll get a job, and that job is evolving so quickly that you have to constantly be in school. And that online enables us to reach people who are doing that, but we've got to do the basics as well.

Phillip Clay: I would agree with Patrick that shortcuts are not appropriate. I certainly think that there are ways of leapfrogging but we should not consider those solutions, and certainly not long term solutions. They may help in a short period. But there are some fundamental changes that are needed. I went to the grocery store last week to buy some shrimp. And they were frozen. So I asked the guy, where did they come from and he said, "Vietnam." Now Vietnam is 10,000 miles from Boston. And I said to myself, these were farmed shrimp off the coast of Vietnam. Why couldn't they do that in Ghana? Ghana is a 7-hour flight from Boston. Vietnam is 16 hours. There's no way around figuring out ways throughout Africa to find ways of adding value to the assets, including the human assets, that exist throughout the continent.

There is no such thing as online research independent of bricks and mortar somewhere. Now the bricks and mortar somewhere now for much of the research that takes place in Africa is in some other place. There will be a big project on soil or seeds but the basic laboratory is someplace else. Those labs have to be in Africa and they have to be African students learning about soil and seeds. There's no way around that. Well, there are some things you can learn online about soil and seeds, but basically you have to have faculty teachers on the continent doing the research part-time, teaching part-time, connecting the research findings to applications in Africa that will then generate jobs, that will then create the need not for PhDs in soil but for farmers who are enabled by the technology and science. None of that is online. That has to be bricks and mortar continent. Networked globally, yes. But the work has to be on the continent.

Disease is another area. There are diseases which are basically infectious diseases that are being researched all over the world. Africans are sometimes connected to those, but the core research is not centered on the continent. It should be.

Ladia Bosare: I have two brief questions. Ladia Bosare. I work with HB Education Investment Fund. We provide financing for African students to study in global universities, therefore encouraging future brain drain like Patrick here. My questions are slightly more obstruct beyond the specific experience of Ashesi. You're working on a continent where attention is shifting from one crisis to another and resources shift to follow those headlines and crises. How have you managed to sustain attention on something so important and long term as something like human capital development and the quality that is required for Africa to compete in the 21st century, which is what you're working on and we should all be applauding. The second question is related to that, and Professor Clay, you spoke about the distinction between massification and quality and we're all excited and perhaps a little worried about the Vision 2063 and the ambition of moving from single digit enrollment rates on the African continent for university students to 50% or somewhere there about. How is this to be done in order to maintain quality. What needs to be done and who needs to do it?

Phillip Clay: Well, let me make a comment. I don't know what the number is now, I know it is single digits now. But let me just put that number in context. About 32% of Americans have a bachelor's degree. Western Europe is about 10% more than that. So the idea of 60% or 70% is certainly an ambition. But that's not achievable in a brief period of time and 2063 is sooner than we think. I think that it's important to keep in mind that you really have to build a human resource one student at a time. We have 4,500 institutions of higher education in the US. You hear about 250. Those are the considered the premiere institutions and highly selective. Most of the others are not highly selective. Most of the others are not excellent. And many of them are not credible as institutions of higher education. We have an infection of for-profit institutions that is eroding both the resources and the expectations that young people have for what they are getting. I don't think that there is any path other than to build with excellence. The number is probably not going to get to 63%, but if you double 7% that would be a big difference. What I worry about in Brain Drain is not Africans to the West, but rural Kenya to Nairobi. That's another Brain Drain we don't talk about, but it's equally harmful to townships and settlements outside the major cities on the continent.

Patrick Awuah: Well you had a question about how we maintain focus. We are so convinced about the importance of education and the importance of educating a certain kind of leader for the African continent that we've just not been discouraged by, focused on other things. And by the way, some of those crises really do need to be addressed as well. So when there's an Ebola crisis, we all need to focus on that because it's such an existential threat that something needs to be done about it. But the business of educating people must continue because that's the long term way to address some of these crises that come up. So that's been our approach and focus. We're just staying very committed to the work that we are doing.

Audience Member (Jenna Craydon): Hi I'm Jenna Craydon, I teach at Columbia. One of the issues that you've raised is ethics. Several questions in one: How do you integrate ethics into the curriculum. Two: You mentioned ethics when you get to the job market. But there's another ethics: remembering where you came from. So in other words, we have many graduates who here, look at Washington, who came from illustrious universities, who forgot where they came from, forgot what they learned. How do you make ethics a lifelong thing?

Audience Member: To the extent that we now have empirical data, 10-15 plus years at Ashesi, and some similar organizations, what are a couple of things that politicians and governments, now that

you are where you are, looking back, could have done to help accelerate this? Either on the corporate side with corporations, or the governments themselves? Because now there is actual information to say, “we didn’t know this before but there’s a new present coming in”. And they get a packet called education. That should be one of the two or five bullet points that says, “do just this and you see more Ashesis” or an acceleration of that 7%, 8% or 9.

Audience Member: Hello, my name is Nana Iansor, Harvard alum, work for GE. Thank you for this presentation so far, it’s been very interesting. I was struck by one of your comments Yawa, but it’s a question for all of you. But you mentioned that there’s a little bit of culture shock when people go from an environment where you’re encouraged to be constructive to another environment where that maybe a bit more challenging. And while that issue, people working in traditionally hierarchical environments, the way in which that may lean on creativity is not probably not unique to Africa but is exacerbated. What do you all do, or how much do you think should be done with organizations on the ground to help them be more accepting, more amenable to that injection of destructive and creative thought from Ashesi University.

Patrick Awuah: The way that we’re teaching ethics at Ashesi, there are three things. One is we model behavior to students and enforce our code of ethics. So outside of the curriculum there is behavior and enforcement that happens. The second is within the curriculum we have African studies courses, some of them like African Philosophical Thought is getting students to look at ancient systems of thinking about the good society in our country and what our ancestors thought of that as a way to get students grounded. But we also have a leadership seminars that run through the four years. There is one on what constitutes a good leader. What does a good leader do or not do, and what are their attributes. And they read a lot of things, from Machiavelli’s Prince to Gandhi and in between and have a real conversation about the type of leader they want to be. There’s a course on what constitutes a governance of a good society, there’s a seminar on constitutes an economy of a good society and there’s a seminar on servant leadership. So no, we don’t have a course called “Ethics”, the closest thing is in Leadership 1, there’s a module called Giving Voice to Values, which is a module that provides simulations of ethical dilemmas and students get to practice how they’ll engage, just the way you teach a pilot in a simulator, right? So that’s how we deal with it in the curriculum.

And then the third thing is asking the students to own a culture of integrity on campus. How do they want to live on this campus? And when they do that, a student walked into my office one day and said, “I have a dilemma. My brother has done a thing so we are bypassing the electricity meter. We’re stealing electricity from the state and I can’t stand it because when I come to school we have this very high integrity environment, and then I go home and we’re thieves.” So he goes and changes it. He spends weeks with not turning on the lights in his bedroom, and then he finally gets their house back to paying electricity. But it’s that living on a campus where everyone is behaving a certain way and is encouraging a certain way to make a difference.

What could governments and companies have done to make a difference? I think I’ll start with corporate. Corporate Ghana initially took a hands-off approach with Ashesi. I went fundraising and they told me very bluntly, “You know Patrick, we’ve funded other universities in the past and we saw no benefit out of it. Prove yourself first.” And so we did. We got interns in there and they got to see the value before they started to engage with us. I wish that they had started sooner. On the government side, the accreditation system was very difficult to get through because we had come in with a curriculum that was different from the norm and there was a very strong pressure

for us to look like everybody else. They had a structural system where new universities had to be mentored by established universities. So, we were being mentored by a state university and as you might imagine, the pressure for us was to look like them. It would have been so much easier if we didn't have to deal with that pressure. I look at it in a sort of philosophical way that we had to make the argument about what we were doing, and perhaps that made us actually more intentional and ended up with a better outcome. So it's all good. But if he didn't have these two impediments, disbelief from corporate and rigid bureaucracy from the regulator, we could have moved a little more quickly.

Phillip Clay: A couple of comments. One, governments, at least in my observation and experience, I'm associated with one university operating in three East African countries. The issues that come up there are regulatory surprises. You get a green light, and then once you head out the light turns red. Another problem is visas. The institution that I'm associated with has a strong medical component and it has a strong hospital system. And of course the goal in any hospital system is to gradually increase the extra specialties that you have. So you do interim medicine and pediatrics, and then you want to go to heart and cancer and so forth. Well, to do any of those things requires you to have staff. It requires you to have heart specialists and it requires you to have equipment and it requires you to have people who can maintain the equipment. And it requires you to have backup equipment for when the equipment breaks down. You don't just have one X-ray machine, you have two. And there have been in recent years increasing difficulty in getting cooperation in making those things happen easily. So if we go out and find a thoracic surgeon who's willing to come to Nairobi and teach and then it takes 6 months to get the visa, we've lost the chance. If we can't get a technician who can maintain the medical equipment, then it becomes a very risky proposition to spend a half million dollars for a machine and you don't have anybody except in Berlin who can get there in three days to fix it. So those are the kinds of things that get in the way. And this isn't about money. This is about enabling conditions and regulation.

On another point, I've been trying to figure out for a long time why individuals do things which a reasonable would know, should know is counterproductive. If you're running an institution and you have a list of things that are in need of support and somebody comes along and says, "here is some money to work on those problems." Then you go away and come back a year later and say, "What's your progress?" What do we consistently find? Evidence that the money is not well spent. And I said to myself, now, if this individual or that institution has had that happen to them ten times in the last 25 years, and each time the resource is for two years, and you know you can't do a reform in two years. So do you take the money the next time somebody comes along with a check? Now ethically I would say, with the benefit of 40 years teaching at an American institution, I would say I'm not going to accept the money unless there is a sustainable path forward about which I can use the money responsibly to achieve the result that I am personally responsible for achieving. I would say thank you very much but I'm not going to accept your money. I am not sure that an African dean can say that. Because if that dean won't accept it, you can just go across campus and another dean will accept it. Or another institution will accept it. So we have to change the environment in which resources become available and that's one of the reasons I believe that institutions like Ashesi have to be supported. We need dozens and we need liberal arts colleges, engineering schools, medical schools, schools of architecture, law, we need them all so that the fusion of innovation and ethics can in fact roll from these places out into the rest of the country. That's the only way that we can get around the dilemma I've talked about where resources are made available, usually not enough, strings attached without accountability and then we accept transformation. That's where we are and that's where we've got to move from.

Nina Marini: Thank you so much to each of our speakers and to the audience for wonderful questions. We're closing the discussion, but we do have a special announcement from Aprile.

Aprile Age: I think Professor Clay brilliantly expressed the urgency and the need and so I'm just happy to announce that the McNulty Foundation, on behalf of Anne McNulty, is offering a \$100,000 challenge grant through the end of July. So any contributions that you make to Ashesi will be doubled. And Ashesi has a clear plan in the next year to significantly expand the number of people on campus and to broaden recruiting and scholarships across Africa. So this is a critical moment for the university and to support it. Thank you all for coming.