

# Introduction to Ashesi University

## Overview

When Patrick Awuah, Ashesi's Ghanaian founder, chose to leave his successful US software career and return home, he founded Ashesi to address Africa's biggest roadblocks to progress: the need for ethical leadership and innovative thinking. Ashesi University in Ghana is striving to educate leaders of exceptional integrity and professional ability. By raising the bar for higher education in Ghana, we aim to make a significant contribution towards a renaissance in Africa.

Ashesi is a private, non-profit university that features a four-year bachelor's program grounded in a liberal arts core curriculum, offering degrees in Business Administration, Management Information Systems, Computer Science, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Computer Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering.

Ashesi began instruction in 2002 with 30 students in crowded rental buildings. Today, 1,013 students from 22 African countries live, work, and study together on our world-class campus in Berekuso, Ghana. Ashesi students come from diverse economic, ethnic, and religious groups. Women make up 47% of students and 48% of students receive need-based financial aid. To date, Ashesi has raised over \$40M for scholarships.

Ashesi graduates work for progress in Africa: On average, 96% of graduates receive job offers, start businesses or enter graduate school within six months of completing their national service, and over 90% live and work on the continent.

## Our Passion

We recognize that many of Africa's problems since independence have been due to the actions of its leaders. Africa needs leaders who are skilled problem solvers and have the ethical principles to guide them towards actions that are good for society, not just themselves. Sadly, Africa's educational systems, which often emphasize memorization, authoritarian teaching regimes, and lack a focus on ethics, are failing to nurture the kinds of leaders who can build a brighter future. Ashesi seeks to nurture enlightened leaders by providing the best undergraduate education in Africa.

## Our Curriculum

Ashesi's major innovation is our curriculum, which is based on best practices from some of the top universities in the world but is designed to address the needs of the African context. Our curriculum places a great emphasis on applied learning, ethics and entrepreneurship. Key elements of the Ashesi education include:

- A liberal arts core program that nurtures critical thinking & communication skills and encourages students to apply theory to practice through class projects and internships.

*Ashesi's mission is to educate future leaders who will make it their life's work to transform the African continent and humanity with it. This mission is driven by a faith in the ability of young people to shape the course of human history and by the knowledge that Africa's problems can be solved by inspired and enlightened Africans.*

- A community service program that ensures students get involved in developing solutions to problems in their communities.
- A four-year leadership seminar series that asks students to engage with issues of ethics, the rule of law, wealth distribution and good governance in Africa.
- A student honor code which requires students to be responsible for their own ethical behavior, and for reporting incidents of academic misconduct during examinations.
- Internships at top companies in Ghana that allow students to learn about local career opportunities, resulting in a very high local employment rate after graduation.
- Senior projects that encourage entrepreneurship among students by challenging them to create business plans, conduct meaningful research, or develop new products that will improve society.

Ashesi University's academic program enables students not only to develop technical excellence in their professional fields, but also to gain a deep sense of civic responsibility and a breadth of vision that enables them to navigate and lead in a changing world.

### **Our Impact and Recognition**

The success of each Ashesi graduate is the seed of a broader success for the region. Ashesi is positioned to make a significant impact on Africa's future by training ethical leaders who will each make a difference in the lives of many.

- Ashesi alumni are expanding Africa's private sector and bringing efficiency and transparency to local, regional, and multi-national organizations. *The African branches of global corporations and NGOs, such as GE, Vodafone, MTN and Grameen, as well as top Ghanaian companies such as Rancard Solutions, Databank and Chase Petroleum, rely on Ashesi graduates to develop and manage critical projects.*
- Ashesi alumni are launching innovative new enterprises that analyze Africa's unmet needs, and create innovative products and services in response. *Ashesi alumni have launched many successful ventures. Their innovative products include mobile healthcare and mobile financial services.*
- And Ashesi alumni are improving African civil society – promoting good governance, encouraging civic engagement, and strengthening the NGO sector. *In post-war countries, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, Ashesi alumni work to rebuild the economy.*

An independent study by UC Berkeley showed that local and multinational employers rated Ashesi the #1 University in Ghana in Quality of Curriculum and Career Preparation and rated Ashesi grads #1 in Communication Skills, Maturity, Professional Skills, and Ethics.

Patrick Awuah and Ashesi have been recognized with several awards for their work improving higher education in Africa, including:

- WISE Prize for Education, Qatar Foundation (2017)
- African Man of the Year, Women in Africa (2017)
- MacArthur Fellow, MacArthur Foundation (2015)
- World's 50 Greatest Leaders, Fortune (2015)
- Elise and Walter A. Haas International Award, UC Berkeley (2015)
- Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneur of the Year (2014)
- Most Creative People in Business 1000, Fast Company (2014)

- Ashesi named 7th Most Respected Company in Ghana & Patrick Awuah named Ghana's 4th Most Respected CEO, PricewaterhouseCoopers (2012)

### **Our Funding Model**

Ashesi is managed to be a lasting institution that is sustained by a strong economic engine grounded in Africa. The Ashesi University Foundation, based in Seattle, Washington, USA, is a 501(c)3 organization designed to help US and international donors support the University. The initial capital to start the University was contributed by generous donors, primarily in the United States, who believed in Ashesi's mission. However, starting in 2008, Ashesi has been able to fund all its operating expenses from tuition revenues alone, while providing a base of scholarships. Philanthropy is used to establish new academic programs, support capital projects and provide additional scholarships for students in need. Since 2012, Ashesi University and Foundation have raised approximately \$77M – partnering with donors, foundations, government agencies, and investors – to fund the University's program and campus development and student scholarships.

### **Our World-Class Campus**

Set on 100 stunning acres overlooking Ghana's capital city Accra, Ashesi's campus is like no other. Not connected to the national water grid, Ashesi employs extensive rainwater collection, innovative waste management systems, and over 700 solar panels to minimize our environmental footprint. We have united traditional African design, modern technology and environmental best practices to create an inspiring base for young Africans to live, collaborate and study.

### **Our Future**

Our vision for the next phase of Ashesi's development is an ambitious one. We plan to grow the campus to over 1,200 students, expand recruiting and scholarships to students from across Africa, and boost the university's ability to drive innovation and entrepreneurship. During this growth, Ashesi will work to keep the campus culture of ethics and excellence intact, maintain its commitment to gender parity, and expand the university's need base scholarship program.

Ashesi is seeking visionary donors and foundations to partner with us to expand campus infrastructure and scholarships to support these goals. Please contact us to learn how you can get involved.