ASHESI UNIVERSITY & FOUNDATION

2018-2020 Strategic Priorities

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Introduction

Ashesi University is a private, secular, not-for-profit university in Ghana. Established in 2002, Ashesi's mission is to educate ethical, entrepreneurial leaders in Africa; to cultivate the critical thinking skills, the concern for others and the courage it will take to transform a continent. Ashesi combines a rigorous liberal arts core with degree programs in Computer Science, Business Administration, Management Information Systems, and Engineering. A student-led honor code, integrated community service, diverse internships, and real-world projects prepare students to develop innovative solutions for the challenges facing their individual communities, countries and the continent at large.

Impact and Recognition

After 16 years, Ashesi is now recognized as one of the finest universities in Africa, with a proven track record in fostering ethical leadership, critical thinking, an entrepreneurial mindset, and the ability to solve complex problems. Ashesi graduates have been recruited across Africa by companies such as General Electric, Amazon, Airtel, Tigo, Nestle and Unilever. Every year since Ashesi's inception, 93-100% of each graduating class has gained employment, entered graduate school, or launched their own business within six months of starting their search. Over 90% of alumni have chosen to stay and work for progress in Africa.

Notable Ashesi alums include Regina Honu '05, who left her corporate career as an IT professional at a bank to found [Soronko Solutions](#), a software company focused on producing software solutions to support local SMEs. Through Soronko Solutions, Regina supports [Tech Needs Girls](#), a social enterprise she founded to help to teach girls in underserved communities how to code. Regina's work is transforming the future for girls in Ghana, and has earned her recognition as a [YALI fellow](#), [Aspen New Voices fellow](#) and [VLISCO Ambassador](#) of the year.

Kpetermeni Siakor '15 exemplifies the impact of Ashesi alumni far beyond the country of Ghana. A native of Liberia, Kpetermeni joined forces with Google during his sophomore year at Ashesi, helping to deploy a tool that allowed students in Monrovia access to open learning material with no internet access. In 2014, as Ebola spread across Liberia, Kpetermeni reached out to colleagues back home looking for ways to help from Ghana. After learning that health workers were struggling to track and store data on Ebola cases, he built and helped deploy tools for the Liberian Ministry of Health that helped medical experts become more efficient at dealing with Ebola. The solution was timely and helped speed up Liberia's progress towards becoming Ebola-free. Kpetermeni is now working as Director of Innovation at the tech hub he helped establish, iLab Liberia. For him, investing in higher education as a way of empowering Africans to solve their own problems is the best way forward in the long run. (See more profiles [here](#).)

With incredible alumni, demand from employers that surpasses current graduate numbers, and a growing student body, Ashesi provides a living example that higher education can transform individual lives, who in turn transform the communities around them. Ashesi and its founder, Patrick Awuah, have been recognized on a global scale for the school's role in preparing future

leaders to address the unique needs of the continent. Patrick is a MacArthur Fellow, and a winner of the WISE Prize for Education. In a 2012 survey of 300 CEOs conducted by PricewatershouseCoopers, Ashesi University was ranked among the top ten most respected organizations in Ghana - a first for an education institution.

In 2018, Ashesi was awarded a Charter by the President of Ghana, freeing the university from supervision by a public university, under Ghana's accreditation rules. The Charter grants the university full independence as a nationally recognized degree-granting institution, the youngest private university to have been granted such recognition in Ghana's history to date.

Our Next Steps

In 2012, the Board of Trustees of Ashesi University Foundation and the Board of Directors of Ashesi University approved a $93 million strategic plan to increase our impact entitled "Vision 2020." Approximately 50% of the target funding is allocated to scholarships, with the balance allocated to the expansion of academic programs and the university campus. Key goals to achieve by 2020 include:

1. Doubling the university's student population from 600 to 1,200 students
2. Expanding student recruiting across Africa, with a target of achieving 30% international enrollment
3. Establishing a high quality, gender-balanced engineering program
4. Boosting research, innovation and entrepreneurship, with of a goal of achieving 20-25% of alumni starting new business within ten years of graduating from college
5. Expanding the university's scholarship program
6. Establishing the Ghana Climate Innovation Center as a business incubator to support entrepreneurs building products and services to mitigate climate change in Ghana
7. Expanding campus infrastructure to support new programs and enrich campus life

Ashesi has raised $78 million, including loans provided by the IFC, to accomplish these goals, and has made significant progress to date. The university successfully started three engineering majors; revamped curriculum to strengthen design thinking and entrepreneurship; and expanded the student body by approximately 67%. 12 buildings have been constructed to enhance academic work and residential life, five of which were completed in 2018.

This growth happened while maintaining a strong scholarship program and a commitment to gender balance in Ashesi's programs. In our classrooms today:
- 47% of students are women
- 17% of students are international, with 22 African countries represented
- 40% of engineering students are women
- 28% of students receive full scholarships covering tuition, housing and meals
- 20% receive partial scholarships

- 52% pay full fees, providing the school with a sustainable model for basic operations

Scholarships are provided by both the university and its philanthropic partners.

At Ashesi, we are driven by a faith in the ability of Africa's young people to shape the course of human history on the continent. We are driven by the knowledge that Africa's problems can be solved by inspired and enlightened Africans, if we give them the skills to do to so. Ashesi is actively looking for strategic partners to join us in this work

Current Priorities

Looking towards the future, Ashesi seeks cross-sector partners to aid in completing Vision 2020, as well as begin planning for the next decade of innovation and impact. The university is seeking $15 million in grant funding over the next three years to complete this ambitious plan to expand and strengthen Ashesi's mission for years to come. The following priorities will ensure Ashesi meets enrollment, expansion and impact goals by the end of 2020.

Key projects for the next three years starting in 2018	Amount
Scholarships	**10,000,000**
Capital Projects*	**4,157,000**
The Ashesi Incubator	985,000
Dorm 2D Residential Hall	3,172,000
Program Development	**1,255,000**
Faculty Development and Research Support	1,000,000
Education Collaborative	255,000
Total Goal	**15,412,000**

*Includes administrative and contingency costs

These funding priorities can be best met by partnering with organizations across the development landscape, including local and international government agencies, private foundations and strategic partners who share a commitment to infusing the African continent with the leadership, entrepreneurship and educated populace needed to mobilize an African renaissance. Projects for consideration include the following:

1. **Scholarships**

   Sub Saharan Africa continues to have the lowest tertiary gross enrollment globally, despite dramatic gains in enrollment.[1] Ashesi scholarships provide a life-changing

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[1] https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/01/10/figures-of-the-week-higher-education-enrollment-grows-in-sub-saharan-africa-along-with-disparities-in-enrollment-by-income/

education to high performing students who do not have access to the funds they need to attend college. For the 2018-2019 academic year, Ashesi tuition, room and board is just under USD $12,500. The Admissions Team works to both recruit and identify students from high need areas as well as across the continent of Africa, recognizing the direct correlation between higher education and income generation, which leads to improved economic outcomes for all. Ashesi is committed to ensuring a school population that reflects diversity on all fronts: culturally, geographically, by way of gender and socio-economically. Recognizing that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more vulnerable to poor performance and the threat of dropping out, Ashesi has created diversity education and inclusion programs along with counseling, mentorship and training programs. These programs benefit students of all types, creating empathy, partnership across traditional social borders and the critical thinking required to prevent segmentation. In doing so, Ashesi students enter their post college work with a deep commitment to equity, equality and serving the needs of all – a critical concept in changing trajectories in government and business which often prioritize the needs of a few, over the opportunities for many.

2. **Capital Projects – $4,157,000**
   a. **The Ashesi Incubator - $985,000**
      In preparation to become problem solvers and employment creators, entrepreneurship is integrated throughout the Ashesi curriculum. From their earliest days on campus, Ashesi students are engaged in activities designed to nurture an entrepreneurial spirit, while building the courage needed to carry forward in their life and work with an entrepreneurial mindset. The Ashesi Incubator will provide physical space and financial resources to the most promising student businesses that originate at Ashesi via the student body. This building will become an integral part of the Ashesi Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, including the Ashesi D:Lab, the Foundations of Design and Entrepreneurship (FDE) program, the Entrepreneurship Capstone and the Ashesi Enterprise Fund.

   b. **Dorm 2D Residential Hall - $3,172,000**
      Ashesi University's campus has been designed to reflect the resources of the continent and the opportunities students have to design an elevated future for Africa. Great care is taken to incorporate renewable energy practices into all construction, while maximizing the usage of space to create a campus that continues to grow and evolve to meet the needs of its students. To compliment recent buildings catering to engineering, laboratory research, student housing and student life, Ashesi endeavors to further expand campus with the creation of an additional 96-bed dormitory to support enrollment growth to 1200 students by 2020. This will ensure on-campus housing continues to accommodate at least 50% of students, which goes great lengths to building community on campus. On campus housing also builds the confidence of parents who can be reluctant to let

their daughters go away to university, by assuring them of safe and secure accommodations on campus.

3. **Program Development**

   a. **Faculty Development and Research Support - $1,000,000**

   Ashesi strives to be a world class university across categories and indicators. Growing the Ashesi faculty base and ensuring the school can recruit and retain top academic talent is imperative for meeting the school's impact goals. A number of current faculty are ready to pursue PhD degrees with Ashesi's support. Further, the school seeks to provide research training and support to grow faculty and student engagement in cutting edge research and publishing opportunities.

   Our faculty are known for breaking new ground in their fields. The Ashesi Foundation works to invest in their professional development by sponsoring research projects, procurement of equipment and resources, participation in international conferences, and pursuit of higher education, including PhD acquisition. This support will help faculty thrive in their careers, contribute to their fields and enrich the classroom experience for Ashesi students.

   b. **Education Collaborative - $255,000**

   As our university continues to grow in size, we are working to scale its proven educational model across Africa. In June 2017, Ashesi held its first Education Collaborative. Colleagues in higher education convened for this idea-sharing platform, one where university leaders and stakeholders work to harness best practices in teaching, management and administration. The ultimate goal of the Collaborative is to develop a network of institutions committed to solving Africa's biggest challenges through education.

   Staying true to Ashesi's belief in hands-on learning, the workshop requires participants to actively learn, share and co-design approaches to promote the goals of their institutions. The 5-day workshop is packed with practical, immersive exercises. Professionals from across higher education convene here, including university presidents, directors, faculty and administrative staff. Attending institutions are also diverse: The Collaborative has hosted public and private institutions, and institutions ranging from one to one hundred and seventy-five years old.

   2018 marked the second annual Education Collaborative, with a focus on strategies for improving student outcomes and institutional management. As the Education Collaborative continues, Ashesi will be looking for ways to engage and empower a growing number of pan-African universities, while working to ensure they have the support needed to implement the learning and best practices shared by participants at the Education Collaborative each year, on an ongoing basis.

We are currently seeking to raise $255,000 to support three years of operating funding for the collaborative. This support will enable the Collaborative to sponsor additional institutions from across the continent to participate. We expect to gain new insights each year to help us grow and share our impact exponentially throughout Africa.

Conclusion

As Ashesi University completes Vision 2020 by growing campus enrollment to 1200 students, supporting faculty and growing research capacity, continuing the Education Collaborative and increasing the number of students that can study and live on campus, it will begin to look forward to a new era of operations. By developing its partnership base and engaging funders, it will further strengthen its foundation as an institution focused on preparing African leaders to take on the challenges of the future. With the right partners, we believe Ashesi University can play a formative role in equipping leaders throughout Africa with the foundations needed to turn challenges into opportunities, setting their sights on new horizons for growth and impact.

Appendices

Appendix A: Leadership

Ashesi University

Patrick Awuah, Founder & President
Before founding Ashesi University, Patrick worked as a Program Manager for Microsoft where, among other things, he spearheaded the development of dial-up internet working technologies and gained a reputation for bringing difficult projects to completion.

He holds bachelor's degrees in engineering and Economics from Swarthmore College; an MBA from UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business; and honorary Doctorates from Swarthmore College, Babson College and the University of Waterloo.

He has won many prestigious international awards including the MacArthur Fellowship; the McNulty Prize; and Membership of the Order of the Volta -- one of Ghana's highest awards, given to individuals who exemplify the ideal of service to the country. In 2015, Patrick was named one of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders by Fortune, and received the Elise and Walter A. Haas International Award, given to UC Berkeley alumni with distinguished records of service to their countries.

Patrick served on the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA) of the U.S. Agency for International Development from 2010 to 2016. He is a Fellow of the Africa Leadership Initiative of the Aspen Global Leadership Network; a member of the Council on Foreign Relations; and a member of the Tau Beta Pi honor society for excellence in engineering.

Araba Botchway, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid
Prior to her role at Ashesi, Araba worked as the Program Officer for the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) in West Africa for a period of 12 years. She holds a Bachelor's degree in French with Spanish from the University of Ghana, a post graduate diploma in Marketing of Services from the Maastricht School of Management (Netherlands), an Executive MBA from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, a certificate in Management of Higher Education Institutions from the Galilee College (Israel), and a certificate in Project Management from Syncom Business Intelligence (South Africa).

Yasmin Bucknor, Chief Operating Officer
Yasmin holds a bachelor's degree in Economics and International Relations from Cornell University, and an MBA from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. She began her career in the financial services industry in New York as an investment banker at Société Generale where she focused on asset-based finance. After her MBA, she worked as a director in corporate finance at American Express.

Yasmin is passionate about non-profit management and making an impact in the lives of African youth. Prior to joining Ashesi, she was the Chief Operations Officer at IkamvaYouth, a South African non-profit focused on empowering disadvantaged youth through education, where she helped scale the organization's student reach threefold. Yasmin grew up in the Ivory Coast and is fluent in French.

Angela Owusu-Ansah, Provost
As Provost, Angela Owusu-Ansah supervises all academic matters. Prior to Ashesi, Angela was a Professor of Doctoral Studies, and a Faculty Chair of dissertation research, at Concordia University. She also served as a national commissioner for the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), a major accrediting agency of over 700 higher education institutions. Prior to working at Concordia University, she served as the Associate Dean for Research and Development, under the Faculty Administrative Fellow, Assistant to the President and Director of the Center for Access & Success at Elon University. She was also the Associate Dean of the School of Education, the Director of the Master of Education Programs, Coordinator of Unit Assessment and Accreditation, Licensure Officer, and Chair of Teacher Education Programs, at Elon University. Prior to that she served as Assistant Dean and Associate Professor at Samford University, Orlean Bullard Beeson School of Education.

She was educated in Ghana (BA in psychology with sociology), Spain (MS in International Educational Administration, and certificate in TESOL), the United States (Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration, Quantitative Research Methods and Social Science Statistics, and Instructional Technology), with a residency at Oxford University, United Kingdom. Her research interests include assessment of quantitative literacy, educator preparation provision, and intercultural competence.

Abdul Mahdi, Dean of Students & Community Affairs
Prior to Ashesi, Abdul was the Director of Full-time and Professional MBA Program at the University of Illinois, Urbana, Champaign. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and an MBA from Governor State University in Illinois. Abdul has 15+ years' experience in designing, forecasting, marketing and implementing programs to yield results in corporate and non-for-profit sectors and 13 years of experience in higher education working with a diverse population of faculty, staff and students.

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Joanna Bargeron, Vice President
When she joined Ashesi in 2008, Joanna brought 14 years of non-profit fundraising and administration experience as Development Director and Trustee of Seattle Midwifery School and Assistant Regional Director of Women in Community Service. She earned a BA in Liberal Arts from St. John's College and an MPA from UW's Evans School of Public Affairs. Joanna first traveled to Africa as a Peace Corps volunteer teaching math in The Gambia.

Megan MacDonald, Director of Strategic Partnerships
Megan has over a decade of experience mobilizing resources to ensure access to education, credit and global markets in developing countries. Most recently she served as the CEO of Sasa Designs, where she led the many regulatory, legal and financial parameters of a growing social enterprise. In 2015, Megan negotiated the asset sale and brand transfer of Sasa Designs to Greater Good Wholesale, a division of CharityUSA.com. Megan's Entrepreneurial Studies from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business IGNITE program, as well her MA in International Development from the University of Nairobi, guide a unique approach to non-profit development, entrepreneurship, partnerships and strategy.

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Appendix B: Endorsements of Ashesi's Impact

a. President of Ghana, His Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo, speaking at Ashesi's 2018 Commencement Ceremony

"I am particularly excited, with the setting up of the Engineering school here at Ashesi. It provided the proof, if some was still necessary, that indeed Ashesi was setup to meet the needs of Ghana, and of the continent. Within the short period of its existence, the University made a name for itself in the fields of Business Administration & Computer Science. Ashesi could have chosen to stick to these and other areas, that would not require expensive inputs. But you remained true to your mission, and so today the university has an Engineering school, and a first-class one at that. I'm glad, that Ashesi's efforts are being recognized, and praised around the world, and I am proud to share in its glory, as a Ghanaian.

I urge you, Ashesi Class of 2018, to always keep in mind that you will be judged by the high standards set by your university. An Ashesi graduate is expected to be well equipped and well-versed in whatever area of study he or she has offered. Ashesi graduates will be relied on not to cut corners and not be afraid of hard work. An Ashesi graduate will be expected to have a firm moral compass. These attributes should apply to all of us in our various areas of work and enterprise."

b. Former President of Ghana, His Excellency John Mahama, speaking at the inauguration of Ashesi's permanent campus in 2011

Ashesi has distinguished itself as a first-class institution that combines credible academic achievements with community service. […] In this regard, Ashesi has taken the lead by raising the bar in higher education with the blend of liberal arts in its curriculum which makes your students critical thinkers and problem solvers. These are the type of products Ghana requires its universities to produce to enable the nation to address its challenges of development. I therefore expect the products of Ashesi to develop entrepreneurial skills which will enable them set up their own businesses after school instead of seeking employment in the public sector.
Ashesi's contribution to national development is highly commendable. Your students are found in all sectors of the economy. […] We must equip our new graduates with skills that allow them to think outside the box, to question the status quo, and to innovate. And that is exactly what Ashesi University is doing.

c. Professor Philip Clay, former Chancellor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in the paper, "The Case and a Model for the Transformation of Higher Education in Africa (2016)."

Institutions can start small and grow as resources become available. To achieve excellence and relevance, it is generally not advisable to start by developing something mediocre and hoping that quality will improve over time; instead, excellence and relevance are much more likely to be achieved through the managed growth of an institution that is already of high quality. One

example of this is Ashesi University, in Ghana. Started barely a decade ago, this institution was intended for excellence from the beginning, and over the past decade, it has slowly expanded in size and scope, most recently adding an engineering school.

d. William Easterly, Professor of Economics at New York University, in his book, "The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good."

I have visited Ashesi three times, and I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and talent of the students. The curriculum teaches young Africans to solve problems, not just engage in rote memorization. This high-quality African university, started and run by a Ghanaian, which offers scholarships to young West Africans eager to improve their talents, deserves to attract more notice and support from Western donors.

e. MacArthur Foundation, in presenting a 2015 MacArthur Award to Ashesi President, Dr. Patrick Awuah

Students at Ashesi choose among degree programs in business management, computer science, management information systems, and engineering. All students participate in a four-year leadership seminar on ethics, collaboration, and entrepreneurship that concludes with a service-learning component. Fostering ethical leadership is central to the university's ethos, and in 2008, students established an honor code holding themselves responsible for ethical behavior, the first of its kind in African universities. In a little over a decade, Ashesi is already firmly established as one of Ghana's premier universities. Every one of its graduates has found quality employment, and almost all remain in Africa, where many have started much-needed information technology businesses.

f. President Jimmy Carter, 39th President of the US, Founder of the Carter Center

Ashesi fills an important need. By taking an innovative approach, the college has reached a new level of achievement and excellence and is an example for the rest of Africa.