



ASHESI

ASHESI UNIVERSITY & FOUNDATION

2018-2021 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 within students 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 17 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 alumni 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 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 the lives of individual students 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. Among other accolades, Patrick has been named a MacArthur Fellow and a winner of the WISE Prize for Education. In a 2012 survey of 300 CEOs conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers, 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. Under Ghana’s accreditation rules, the Charter grants Ashesi full independence as a nationally recognized degree-granting institution and frees it from supervision by another public university. Ashesi is the youngest private university to have been granted such recognition in Ghana’s history to date.

Ashesi’s Unprecedented Growth

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 which is now just two years from completion. Approximately 50% of the target funding for this plan is allocated to scholarships, with the balance allocated to the expansion of academic programs and the university campus. The Foundation and University have jointly raised \$85 million, including loans provided by the IFC, to accomplish the plan’s key goals, which included:

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 graduation
5. Growing 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

Additionally, the university has successfully started three engineering majors; revamped curriculum to strengthen design thinking and entrepreneurship; and expanded the student body by over 90%. 12 buildings have been constructed to enhance academic work and residential life, five of which were completed in 2018 alone.

This growth happened while maintaining a strong scholarship program and a commitment to gender balance in Ashesi’s programs. Scholarships are provided by both the university and its philanthropic partners. In our classrooms today:

- 48% of students are women
- 17% of students are international, with 24 African countries represented
- 40% of engineering students are women
- 25% of students receive full scholarships covering tuition, housing and meals

- 18% receive partial scholarships
- 57% pay full fees, providing the school with a sustainable model for basic operations

Partnership in 2020 and beyond

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 Africans, if they are given the education and investment necessary to do so. Ashesi is actively looking for strategic partners to join us in our work.

Looking towards the future, Ashesi seeks cross-sector partners to aid in completing the \$93 million fundraising goal for Vision 2020, as well as begin planning for the next decade of innovation and impact. Ashesi is only \$7.8 million shy of its goal 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 2021.

Vision 2020 Completion	Balance remaining
Scholarships	5,999,519
Capital: Dorm 2D	1,307,000
Fac Dev’t & Research	430,000
Education Collab.	85,000
Total	7,821,519

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 education needed to mobilize an African renaissance. Projects for consideration include the following:

Scholarships \$5,999,519

Despite recent dramatic gains in enrollment, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to have the world’s lowest rate of gross tertiary enrollment.¹ Ashesi scholarships provide a life-changing education to high performing students who do not have access to the funds they need to attend college. For the 2019-2020 academic year, Ashesi tuition, room and board is roughly USD \$12,500. The Admissions Team works to recruit and identify students from high need areas across the continent of Africa, recognizing the direct correlation between higher education and income generation, which leads to improved economic outcomes for all.

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/>

Ashesi is also committed to cultivating a school population that reflects diversity on all fronts: culturally, geographically, socioeconomically, and by way of gender. 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 opportunities to augment the scholarship experience. Although targeted to aid students from disadvantaged backgrounds, 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 enables students to enter their post college work with a deep commitment to equity, equality and serving the needs of all – critical values that will help change trajectories in government and business, which often prioritize the needs of a few, over the opportunities for many.

Dorm 2D Residential Hall \$1,307,000

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 projects, 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, and student life, Ashesi endeavors to further expand campus with the creation of a new 120-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, strengthening the sense of campus community. On-campus housing also builds the confidence of parents who may be reluctant to send their daughters away to university without the promise of secure accommodations on campus.

Faculty Development and Research Support \$430,000

Ashesi strives to be a world class university across categories and indicators. Growing Ashesi's faculty and ensuring the school can recruit and retain top academic talent is imperative for meeting these impact goals. Several faculty members are currently pursuing PhD degrees with Ashesi's support, and many others are ready to join their number once additional resources become available. Further, the school seeks to provide 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, and the Ashesi Foundation works to invest in their professional development by sponsoring research projects, procurement of equipment and resources, and participation in international conferences. This support will help faculty thrive in their careers, contribute to their fields and enrich the classroom experience for Ashesi students.

Education Collaborative \$85,000

As our university continues to grow, we are working to scale its proven educational model across Africa. In June 2017, Ashesi held its first Education Collaborative convening colleagues in higher education for an idea-sharing platform, one where university leaders and stakeholders work to harness best practices in teaching, management and administration. The ultimate goal of the now annual Collaborative is to develop a network of exemplars and institutions committed to solving Africa's biggest challenges through education. 2019 marked the third annual Education Collaborative, with a focus on strategies for improving student outcomes and institutional management. For the first time, the Collaborative convened an Executive Symposium, bringing leaders from the public, private and government sectors together to strategize about education priorities in Ghana and the continent at large.

Staying true to Ashesi's belief in hands-on learning, the workshop and a growing roster of activities require participants to actively learn, share and co-design approaches to promote the goals of their institutions. All learning is packed with practical, immersive exercises. Professionals from across higher education, including university presidents, directors, faculty and administrative staff carry their interactions into on-going webinars, communications and in the future, geographically distributed convenings across the continent. 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. As the Education Collaborative continues, Ashesi will be looking for ways to engage and empower a growing number of pan-African universities and leaders, while working to ensure they have the support needed to implement the learning and best practices shared by participants each year on an ongoing basis.

The Ashesi Foundation is raising \$85,000 to augment existing donor support for the Collaborative's next phase of development. This support will enable the Collaborative to sponsor additional institutions across the continent to participate as well as begin to expand by cultivating exemplars – universities that share Ashesi's commitment to educational excellence and can help us share the Education Collaborative throughout the continent. We expect the Education Collaborative to grow quickly and with it, opportunities to increase our support as we 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 1,200 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. 2022 will usher in a new strategic plan intended to explore program expansion, growing Ashesi's impact across the continent, and strengthening the sustainability of the institution. By developing its partnership base and engaging funders, 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 Générale 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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Ashesi University Foundation

Joanna Barger, 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.

Ashesi University Foundation Board of Directors

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<p>Scott Kucirek Partner, Five Star Organics LLC MBA, UC Berkeley, Haas School of Business</p>	

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.