

Faculty Grants for International Connections
Lehigh-Ashesi Study Abroad Program: "Development, History, Culture and Performance in Ghana"

Kwame Essien, Assistant Professor (History Department & Africana Studies)

Professional and Personal Goals:

The purpose of this Faculty Grants for International Connections (FGIC) proposal is to request funds so I can travel to Ghana to have meetings with faculty members at Ashesi University College (AUC) and visit possible activity sites for establishing the first "Lehigh-Ashesi Service Learning Program" in 2016. This proposal was influenced by two major factors: First, by my past attempts in 2013 to establish study abroad partnership between Lehigh and AUC with Professors Stephen E. Armah and Joseph Oduro-Frimpong, both assistant professors at AUC (see flier); and second, by the recent Office of International Affairs' (OIA) fact-finding visit to AUC in May 2014. I was part of the OIA delegation that consisted of faculty and administrators from Lehigh University, who met with the AUC team that included Professor Oduro-Frimpong. The mission and motivations I had when I initiated communication with AUC in 2013 is reflected in the OIA and Lehigh University's broader vision for global engagements, particularly in Africa. Having this great opportunity provided by FGIC to build on this initiative and see this vision come to past is the inspiration for this proposal. I will like to take advantage of this synergy and become the "bridge" for linking these two interrelated interests between Lehigh and AUC to expand Lehigh's international footprint and connections in Africa, specifically Ghana.

This will not be the first time I will be involved in international programs. Last year, I led the "Internship for Humanitarian Engineering" program in Ghana—the first Lee Iacocca internship on the African continent. Prior to working at Lehigh, I was part of a team from the University of Texas that established the "Ghana Maymester Study Abroad Program" in 2009 and 2010. While the program will facilitate international collaborations and connections between the two institutions, it will also serve as an alternative plan or solution to problems with recruiting students to participate in large size study abroad programs in Ghana. I have expatiated on this latter point below.

Expected Outcomes: Short Term

- Solving Problems with *not* meeting minimum requirements for study abroad in Ghana
I attempted to attract about 14 students to the Lehigh-Ashesi Study Abroad Program in 2012 and 2013 using Study Abroad Fair and one-on-one students session but an average of 8 students signed up for both years partly because of the high number of students we expected. The programs were cancelled and students who were committed to the program were highly disappointed. I believe some of the reasons for these low responses are unfamiliarity with me, as a new faculty and with the territory or geographical region (Ghana). The situation has improved lately. For instance, when we returned to campus after the "Internship for Humanitarian Engineering" program in Ghana last year, the interns shared their experience with their friends and I was interviewed by a Lehigh University staff. She wrote an article about the internship entitled, "Solving a Fertilizer Problem." Thereafter, a number of students contacted me and expressed their interest in a study abroad in Ghana in 2016. The Study Abroad Office also made a similar request.
One of the short term goals is to begin a small size program with about 6 to 8 students (which is the typical number I get), in 2016 to establish a reference point, and a foundation to provide the publicity we need to establish Lehigh's footprint in Ghana and Ashesi's footprint on Lehigh's campus. We anticipate that, such approach will continue to give us visibility at Lehigh to attract more students for future programs.

Expected Outcomes: Long Term

- Using small size programs to facilitate large size ones; interdisciplinary research and students exchange
- With the assistance of both Professors Armah and Oduro-Frimpong at AUC, our collaboration would aid long term large size programs drawn from or built on small size programs to facilitate interdisciplinary research and enhance critical thinking skills among students.
- There are several Lehigh Strohl Grant recipients from various academic backgrounds (Engineering, Economics, History, Pre-Med, Urban Planning, Bio-Chemistry etc.) who are seeking various opportunities in Ghana—the safest, democratically and economically stable country in West Africa to complete their Senior Thesis research projects. I have mentored and supervised three of these student projects since 2014. Lehigh-Ashesi Study Abroad Program would attract students who have shown interest in traveling to Ghana. It would also provide both Lehigh and Ashesi students the opportunity for research collaboration covering interdisciplinary scholarly projects and creative works.
- Another long term goal is that Lehigh-Ashesi Study Abroad Program and international connection would provide several opportunities for identifying other areas of mutual interests like students and faculty exchanges to sustain relations between the two institutions.

Pre-Trip Planning and Nature of Interaction:

My invitation to join the “Africa Study Group” which was established by the OIA and traveling to Ghana with the OIA delegation to Ghana last year gave me an opportunity to interact with Ashesi University College. However, the schedule for the trip did not provide sufficient time for me to interact with the faculty there. Since then, I have received emails and had several phone conversations with faculty at AUC. Discussions about collaboration between me, Professor Stephen E. Armah, an econometrician by training and an Assistant Professor of Business Administration and Professor Joseph Oduro-Frimpong who writes extensively about Ghanaian popular cultures has progressed steadily. The three of us will teach during the Lehigh-Ashesi Service Learning program and will invite faculty from the University of Ghana, Legon to participate. In planning for the Lehigh-Ashesi study abroad program in 2016, we have drafted a tentative program with potential research and activity areas/sites. I have not been able to visit those areas personally to make decisions on which will best serve the purpose of the service-exposure and be the most effective in enhancing and building the capacity of our students, as well as provide opportunities for them to contribute and have impact in their individual areas of research. In addition, I need to meet with the relevant people in these areas who are already collaborating on the local level to come to shared expectations that will facilitate our goals. In particular, I will meet with other identified faculty collaborators in University of Ghana, Legon, which is one of the major universities in Ghana. These visits have not been possible, partly due to the lack of finance. The success of “Lehigh-Ashesi Service Learning Program” in 2016 will depend heavily on funding. The Faculty Grants for International Connections provides the perfect opportunity to advance this cause to achieve this mutual interest to establish Lehigh’s global footprint firmly in Ghana.

Expected Follow-up:

When I return to campus I will submit a report to the Vice President for International Affairs and other officials and join other grant recipients to make presentation about my experience at AUC.

Budget (\$)	Amount in Dollars
Airline Ticket from JFK to Ghana	1,800.00
Hotel for 2 weeks	910.00
Meals	840.00
Ground Transportation in Ghana	420.00
Telephone & Internet Service	250.00
Miscellaneous	200.00
TOTAL	\$ 4,420.00

ⁱ For a brief discussion of the proposed program, the classes will be held on Ashesi campus and the University of Ghana, Legon. The sites for the group projects will include Berekuso (the town where Ashesi is located) and nearby communities in Accra that meet the needs of the program. Students from Lehigh and Ashesi will form integrated groups to identify and will explore economic and developmental theories particularly how Ghana's current economic development/underdevelopment was shaped by her historical past. Cultural immersion is important to this program. Students will conduct interviews, participate in cultural programs and festivities as well as listen to lectures about the history and popular cultures in Ghana. Some of these materials will be read during orientation session on Lehigh's campus before traveling to Ghana. At the end of the program, the joint Lehigh-Ashesi student groups will carry out the proposal and will hold a "Research Fair." They will each prepare a poster of their projects to present their results and also based on feedback from stakeholders on relevance of results. The projects will be evaluated by faculty members. There will be a formal presentation of the proposals at the end of the program which will be opened to the academic community and the public. The participants will share their experience with other students when they return to Lehigh campus.



Lehigh-Ashesi



Summer 2013

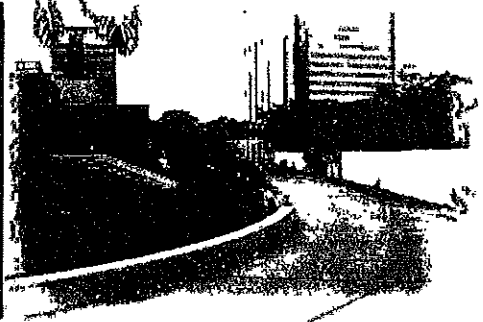
ASHESI

Study Abroad

-GHANA-

“Development, History, Culture and Performance in Ghana”

June 2 – July 2



For Additional
INFORMATION

Sign-Up at the Study
Abroad Fair or Contact:
kwe212@lehigh.edu

DISCUSSION:

- Itinerary
- Cost of trip
- Opportunities for Financial Aid





Kwame Essien <kwame1essien@gmail.com>

I changed the Objectives Slightly

2 messages

Stephen Armah <armah.stephen@gmail.com>

* Mon, Aug 13, 2012 at 12:03 PM

To: kwame Essien <kwame1essien@gmail.com>

Objectives: One of the objectives of the summer service learning project is to challenge students to explore how historical, socio-economic and cultural factors have shaped Ghanaian and African Diaspora history. The state of Ghana's institutions, how they compares to western and diasporan institutions and the consequences for development as well as the role of western and diasporan aid in Ghana's development will be addressed.

To meet the program's goals, an aspect of the program will examine the history and cultures of Ghana covering topics about diverse cultures, slavery, sites of memories, Pan-Africanism, colonialism, independence struggle and others to show the ways in which these themes have influenced *development* and *underdevelopment* in Ghana. The lessons on performance will provide a comparative study of hip-hop in the United States and hip-life in Ghana and its implication on globalization.

Other Goals:

Students who successfully complete this study abroad course should be able to:

- Examine the impact of *development* and *underdevelopment* in Ghana especially as it relates to foreign aid.
- Gain a broad and first-hand knowledge of Ghanaian cultures, customs and people's—which would assist students to deconstruct negative perceptions they may have about Ghana and Africa in general
- Describe the origins of slavery, its purpose and significance in Ghanaian societies and how it shaped the Middle Passage /Trans-Atlantic slave trade
- Understand why people of African descent identify themselves as African-Americans, Afro-Brazilians, Afro-Cubans, Afro-Columbians, Afro-British, Afro-Mexicans etc
- Understand how slaves and their descendants cultivated strong cultural bonds and memories of a "homeland" in Ghana and how this facilitated the processes of "return"
- Explain cross-cultural interactions between "diasporan blacks" and Ghanaians
- Show the cultural, historical and economic significance of sites of memories to tourism

Qualification: The Lehigh-Ashesi Service Learning program will form integrated groups of Lehigh and Ashesi students which comprise of about 10 Lehigh and 3-5 Ashesi students (Ashesi student will serve as student peers). It may include other student peers from other institutions (Knutsford University College, The University of Ghana, Legon etc) depending on the needs of the program to foster diversity.

Qualification into the program will be based on academic standing at LU and AU.

Admission Requirement: A GPA of at least 2.75 is required.

Instruction: Most of the courses will be taught by Professors James Peterson (LU), Kwame Essien (LU), and Stephen Armah (AU).

Besides the faculty from LU and AU other Ghanaian professors, professionals and activists from diverse backgrounds/disciplines and with great deal of expertise will lead various sections in the course to provide students with a broad overview covering wide range of thought-provoking themes and subjects

Hi Nii,

I have almost completed the tentative schedule and will send it to you soon so that you can squeeze your themes. Please note that we have less than three weeks of "proper studies." The rest will be tour, traveling etc. The three weeks have to be shared among the three of us : Armah, Essien & Peterson (development, history/culture & Performance). This means that you have only 7 days to complete your course.

As I mentioned during our meeting we would love to stay on Ashesi campus most of the time, but that will depend on how much they charge \$\$\$\$ for housing compared to other suitable locations in town.

Also, although the focus is academic we have to make it fun ie we have to combine the course with activities such as visits to Aburi Gardens, Berekuso chiefs palace, cultural performance etc (to minimize stress, boredom) whilst we are still lodging on Ashesi campus---

before we travel to Kumasi, Cape Coast etc

What do you think?

[Quoted text hidden]

Stephen Armah <armah.stephen@gmail.com>
To: kwame Essien <kwame1essien@gmail.com>

* Tue, Aug 14, 2012 at 3:41 PM

KWAME SO FAR I REALL LIKE YOUR SUGGESTIONS IN TERMS OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR. WE CAN END CLASSES AT 12 EACH DAY AND HIT TOWN:)

I especially like...."although the focus is academic we have to make it fun ie we have to combine the course with activities such as visits to Aburi Gardens, Berekuso chiefs palace, cultural performance etc (to minimize stress, boredom) whilst we are still lodging on Ashesi campus---"

I WILL ALSO SUGGEST

- 1: A VISIT TO ABOKOBI: It is actually near Berekuso, behind the hill.and has some extraordinary history and ties to colonization (from a Ga perspective)
- 2: VISIT TO JAMES FORT; AND THE OLD PARTS OF ACCRA
3. A VISIT TO THE ARTS CENTER
4. A VISIT TO THE KWAME NKRUMAH MUSEULEUM
5. A VISIT TO THE NEW CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT WITH MOVENPICK ETC

[Quoted text hidden]

kwame Essien <kwame1essien@gmail.com>
To: Stephen Armah <armah.stephen@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 14, 2012 at 4:26 PM

ok, i AM ALMOST FINISHED WITH THE tentative SCHEDULE. I WILL INCLUDE SOME OF PLACES YOU SUGGESTED. I will also send you a flyer/logo for the program. We shall use this in two weeks to start advertising the trip. Feel free to bring your ideas.

Kwame

[Quoted text hidden]

From: Kwame Essien <kwame1essien@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2015 6:39 AM
To: odurofrimpong@gmail.com; Joseph Oduro-Frimpong
Subject: URGENT: 2016 Lehigh-Ashesi Summer program

[Quoted text hidden]

Kwame Essien <kwame1essien@gmail.com>
To: Joseph Oduro-Frimpong <joduro-frimpong@ashesi.edu.gh>

✱ Thu, Mar 12, 2015 at 11:46 AM

Hi Professor—you are all over the world ohhhh. Please revise the attached document with any ideas you may have and send it to me at your earliest convenience. I will call you soon.

[Quoted text hidden]

 **Lehigh Ashesi 2015 Proposal.docx**
32K

Joseph Oduro-Frimpong <joduro-frimpong@ashesi.edu.gh>
To: Kwame Essien <kwame1essien@gmail.com>

Fri, Mar 13, 2015 at 7:19 AM

Hello Kwame: I have gone through the piece and the it reads well to me. Very, very minor things corrected. Let me know if you have questions and also I will be waiting for the call.
Cheers, Frimpong

Joseph Oduro-Frimpong, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Arts and Sciences
Ashesi University
1 University Avenue, Berekuso, E/R
PMB CT3 Cantonments
Accra, Ghana
joduro-frimpong@ashesi.edu.gh

From: Kwame Essien <kwame1essien@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2015 4:46 AM
To: Joseph Oduro-Frimpong
Subject: Re: URGENT: 2016 Lehigh-Ashesi Summer program

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 **Lehigh Kwame.docx**
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Stephen Armah <armah.stephen@gmail.com>
To: Kwame Essien <kwame1essien@gmail.com>

* Fri, Mar 13, 2015 at 8:17 AM

Dear Prof Kwame Essien,
This is Dr Stephen Armah from Ashesi University in Ghana:

<http://www.ashesi.edu.gh/academics/business-administration/faculty-pages-ba/659-armah-stephen.html>

I am writing regarding the Ashesi-Lehigh study abroad program we initiated 3 years ago but suspended because of the rather high minimum number of students required to run the program.

However, events that have occurred in the past year that has offered other alternatives and point to the fact that we should revise the program ASAP.

For example you will recall that

(1) Yu led the Lee Iacocca "Internship for Humanitarian Engineering to Ghana in 2014 with four Lehigh University students during which we continued firming our plans

(2) You led another delegation from the Office of International Affairs, Lehigh University (African Study Group) to Ashesi University in May 2014 where both parties identified several opportunities and synergy for future collaboration between the two institutions.

Part of the responsibilities of the delegation was to continue exploring prospects of these international collaborations between the two institutions: a challenge both you and have taken very seriously

Lastly as the Africa studies program at Le-high now seems to agree that a small number of exchange students is still a good idea this is exactly the time to put finishing touches to our plans and get ready to implement it in 2016

Regards,
Dr Armah

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