

# Growing the Ashesi Dream

---

April 10, 2009

## I. ASHESI'S MISSION – WHAT WE'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT

Ashesi's mission is to train a new generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders in Africa. We seek to begin a movement to train people who have a strong commitment to their society, who can think critically, and who can engage with the world around them to launch a new era of locally-led progress in Africa.

We believe that most of Africa's problems since independence from colonial rule have been due to the actions of its leaders. Africa's leaders have overseen the continent's decline by acts of commission such as corruption, war, human rights abuses and poorly conceived economic policies; and by acts of omission such as failing to build effective institutions such as well-functioning markets, democratic governance systems, and the rule of law. We believe that unless Africa begins to pay more attention to **how** its leaders are trained, a positive future will not be realized on the continent. Conversely, nurturing a new wave of inspired leadership in Africa will turn the tide of the continent's history.

This is why Ashesi is engaging in education at the point where Africa's future leaders make their transition into adulthood and form lasting values. We believe that this period of transition is perhaps the most effective time to engage in a quest for enlightenment. Yet, this mission has been largely ignored by institutions in Africa, and by their development partners. We seek to change this. This is what we are passionate about.

Our team is motivated by the vision of an educational system in Africa that requires all future leaders to ask the quintessential questions about what a good society is, and how it should be organized. We are excited about the prospect of every undergraduate student, every military academy cadet, and every police academy cadet probing these questions before they graduate.

We are also motivated to bring about a new era when all African citizens will be taught to think as entrepreneurs; when they will learn to innovate, to persist in developing creative solutions to local problems, and to see local opportunities. For too long, Africa's colleges have stressed memorization and rote-learning; we work to replace that with problem-solving and critical thinking.

We can imagine what would happen if all of Africa's teachers, doctors, engineers, politicians, judges, police officers and military officers believed in the Ashesi concepts of "*leadership as service*" and that "*work speaks louder than words*". We see how the work we do at Ashesi is already causing ripple effects in other tertiary education institutions and represents an enormous opportunity to make a deep impact in the world by setting Africa on a different course.

## II. ASHESI TODAY

Ashesi University has come a long way since it began instruction in 2002. We have graduated four classes of students, 95% of whom are productively employed in Africa (the remainder are pursuing graduate education abroad). Our institution offers three majors (Computer Science, Business Administration, and Management Information Systems) based on a liberal arts core curriculum that teaches a breadth of thinking that is essential for inspired leadership.

Economically, the university reached a significant milestone in 2008 when the university succeeded in funding all of its operating cash needs with tuition income, while maintaining a strong financial aid program for low income students.

Ashesi has grown from 30 pioneers to almost 400 students, and boasts a very strong reputation in the Ghanaian academe. From our humble beginnings, Ashesi has matured to become the only educational institution in Ghana whose students can be trusted to take exams on their honour, without instructor supervision.

Ashesi University is on the path to sustainability, both in terms of its economic model and its campus culture.

## III. ASHESI'S FUTURE

As we've proved our educational and economic model, we have become more confident about scaling this project, and in particular, developing a permanent campus and growing our academic offerings.

Our growth will be driven by the idea of educating "*leaders of industry and government*". This idea has led us to a curricular architecture that begins with a core Liberal Arts curriculum as its foundation and that offers bachelor degree programs in Science and Technology; Business Management; Economics; and Law.

<b>Engineering &amp; Applied Sciences</b>	<b>Management &amp; Economics</b>	<b>Arts &amp; Sciences</b>	<b>Law &amp; Political Philosophy</b>
Engineering, Computer Science, and Management Information Systems	Bachelors in Economics, Business & Public Management,	Begin with an interdisciplinary <b>Liberal Studies</b> major, and evolve to more specific majors	A proposed five-year LLB with a four-year BA in Political Philosophy
<b>Core Curriculum</b>			
Liberal arts & science foundation, with a strong emphasis on leadership, community service and ethics.			

## Major Offerings

### Engineering & Applied Sciences

Ashesi's science and engineering program will focus on educating leaders who will drive the industrial capacity of Africa.

Ashesi currently offers two majors in the applied sciences: Computer Science, and Management Information Systems. The **Computer Science** program is designed to produce graduates who will enable Ghana to take maximum advantage of the opportunities created by the information revolution. As advanced electronic networks render geographical location less important, Ashesi's students will be well positioned to spearhead Ghana's entry into the electronic marketplace, to build customized applications for local and international markets, and to start entrepreneurial ventures of their own. Today, Ashesi students are actively engaged in developing applications for mobile phones and the internet, with applications in commercial banking, micro-finance, and public health.

The **Management Information Systems** program at Ashesi University trains system analysts and managers, who combine the knowledge of information technology with an understanding of business and organizational strategy. As such, this interdisciplinary program trains managers who are uniquely empowered to enhance the competitiveness of enterprises in the new knowledge economy. Students acquire skills needed to design, install, and manage information systems, and to develop customized software and electronic media solutions.

The next addition to Ashesi's curriculum in applied sciences will be an **Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE)** program that is closely allied with our current Computer Science and Management Information Systems majors. The EEE program will educate engineers who will contribute to Africa's growing telecommunications industry and help the continent stay abreast of the most recent advances in digital communications and computing systems.

### Economics and Management

Ashesi's Economics and Business Management program is designed to educate men and women who can implement economic policies and lead African businesses in an increasingly global economy driven by rapid technological change.

Ashesi's current major in **Business Administration** educates such people for Africa by providing a well-rounded business education that emphasizes the fundamentals of business, and introduces students to the latest trends transforming the business world. **Trends that particularly affect the developing economy, such as microfinance, will also be explored.** In order for Ashesi's business graduates to excel in leading African industry, they must not only understand the forces shaping today's marketplace, but also be life-long learners, and must be able to discern opportunities that derive from the needs of society, now and in the future. As such, Ashesi's business program depends heavily on the foundation set by the core curriculum.

The next addition in this area will be a major in **Economics**. Focus areas that will be explored in designing this major include Agricultural and Resource Economics (with a particular emphasis on agribusiness) and Economics & Law (with an emphasis on government policy, regulation, and business law). Another potential focus area will be development economics, including innovative approaches to private and capital market finance and microfinance as effective alternatives to dependence on foreign aid.

## **Arts & Sciences**

We propose to introduce a new interdisciplinary major in the liberal arts and sciences, **Liberal Studies**, which will enable students to fashion self-guided programs in the humanities, social sciences, mathematics, management, law, applied and natural sciences. Students who choose this major will experience a broad intellectual education that enables them to tackle a wide variety of problems, to discern the connections between fields of study, to question and explore and to craft novel solutions to difficult problems.

## **Law & Political Philosophy**

People with legal training often form the bedrock upon which the rule of law is built in any society. They serve in the judiciary, parliament, and executive branch. And they are crucial for securing property rights and creating an environment that supports innovation and entrepreneurship. A legal education grounded in the Liberal Arts, which shapes students to think broadly and to deeply contemplate the realm of ethics, is therefore essential for Africa's future. Because of Ghana's unique circumstance, we propose to develop a **five year LLB** program that enables a strong legal education based on a broad liberal arts education, but that is also cost effective. Students who pursue this path can graduate after **four years with a Bachelors degree in Political Philosophy**, or after five years with both a BA in Political Philosophy and Bachelor of Laws (LLB).

## **Guidance Moving Forward**

As we did with our first three majors, Ashesi seeks to meet with innovative leaders in each of these fields as we explore and design these programs. We have been honored to have extremely high quality international and local partnerships to guide us as we craft a curriculum, hire faculty, and achieve accreditation for new majors. This is a very exciting time for Ashesi University and we look forward to growing and deepening our contributions towards the education of Africa's future leaders.