THE STOOL MUST NOT TOUCH THE GROUND: STUDENT AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AT A LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTION IN GHANA, WEST AFRICA

by

JILLIAN ANTOINE MARTIN

(Under the Direction of Chris Linder)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore student and community affairs as conceptualized and enacted by the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs (OSCA) at Ashesi University in Ghana, West Africa. The mission of Ashesi University, founded in 2002, was to inspire the next generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders for and from the continent of Africa (Ashesi Overview, 2015). At Ashesi the OSCA staff supports this bold academic mission and facilitates students' critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills (Student Life, n.d.).

Three research questions guided this study: (a) How do the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs conceptualize student and community affairs?; (b)What strategies do the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs employ to enact student and community affairs?;and (c) How do other university constituents (faculty, students, administrators, and alumni) perceive student and community affairs at Ashesi University? I represent the findings of this study as proverbs corresponding to sections of the Ashesi University logo.

The central finding of this study was that student and community affairs were conceptualized and enacted in line with the mission of Ashesi to inspire the next generation of leaders. Implications from this study and other areas of future research are presented.

INDEX WORDS: Student affairs, Higher education, Ashesi University, Ghana

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by

JILLIAN ANTOINE MARTIN

BS, Oglethorpe University, 2005

MEd, University of Georgia, 2009

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by

JILLIAN ANTOINE MARTIN

Major Professor:	Chris Linder
Committee:	Candace Maddox-Moore Darris Means Jori Hall

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is through Him that this journey was even possible and to Him that I give all the glory, honor, and praise.

"He must increase, I must decrease" John 3:30 (King James Version)

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths" Proverbs 3:5-6 (King James Version).

"I stand on the shoulders of my ancestors and I imagine roots emanating from them and into the Mother Earth to keep me grounded and to sustain me when there is danger around me" (Baca, 2012, p. 80).

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CHAPTER 1

BEGINNING

I was a little boy, at home with strangers.
I liked my playmates, and knew well,
Whence all their parents came;
From England, Scotland, royal France
From Germany and oft by chance
The humble Emerald Isle.
But my brown skin and close-curled hair
Was alien, and how it grew, none knew;
Few tried to say, some dropped a wonderful word or stray;
Some laughed and stared.
And then it came: I dreamed.
I placed together all I knew
All hints and slurs together drew.
I dreamed (DuBois, 1963, p. 2) …

"Jillian, are you awake? I don't want you to miss us enter." My colleague touched my shoulder to wake me as we arrived at Ashesi University. At some point during the hour-long bus ride from Accra to Berekuso, where Ashesi is located, I dozed off. It was December 2015 and I was one day into a ten-day study abroad experience in Ghana with other educators. Months earlier, I began researching student affairs in Ghana to prepare for this trip and only found one study about the perceptions of deans of students at Ghanaian institutions (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; 2015). As I began connecting with scholars and practitioners about student affairs in Ghana, and more broadly the African continent, Ashesi University kept coming up in conversations as a model for innovative higher education in Ghana. I encountered Ashesi and its bold mission during the readings and discussions for the study abroad class. The institution permeated my thoughts, conversations, and dreams. So, when I opened my eyes on my first day in Ghana after the longest plane ride of my life, the busyness of arriving in a foreign country, and the bumpy

bus ride from the urban metropolis of Accra to the rural landscape of Berekuso, I thought it was another dream conjured from my anticipation.

This was not a dream, but was my first visit to Ashesi University. As I got off the bus and took in the campus setting, I was speechless. The pictures online did not do the campus justice. Ashesi University is set in the rural landscape of the eastern region of Ghana. The terracotta-colored roofs of the buildings merge into tan stone and columns of different colored stone. The multi-colored brick walkways seemed to beckon me forward into the campus. Once I walked up toward the open courtyard full of lush green grass, flowering bushes, and the stone columns of the building turned horizontal, I felt the boldness, the magic, and the refreshing new beginning that has become the hallmark of Ashesi University. After meeting with the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs (OSCA) and a campus tour, I felt certain of my decision to explore student and community affairs at Ashesi University. So, in October 2016, after agreements with staff, approvals, and consent for human research, I returned to Ghana to collect data for this dissertation study on how student and community affairs are conceptualized, enacted, and perceived at Ashesi University. In this chapter, I introduce the background, context, methodology, boundaries, and significance of this qualitative case study.

Background of the Study

As higher education expands globally, student affairs and services are also expanding to meet increasing demands of institutions and their students (Ludeman, 2001; Ludeman, Osfield, Hidalgo, Oste, & Wang, 2009). The student affairs profession emerged from the U.S.-Western context of higher education with a focus on students' out of classroom experiences (Leonard, 1956; Ludeman, 2001; Ludeman et al, 2009). Student affairs evolved from the work of appointed deans of men and women to foster the holistic development of students and support in-class

learning (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Leonard, 1956; Nuss, 2003). First called student personnel workers, student affairs practitioners provide services, design programs, and advised students' academic and career aspirations in a variety of functional areas outside of classrooms (Dungy, 2003; Murray & Nash, 2016; Winston, Creamer, & Miller, 2001). Student affairs practitioners' roles and philosophies of practice have evolved as institutions of higher education changed to serve the needs of an increasingly diverse student body (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Nuss, 2003).

Student affairs and services supported higher education's mission to bettering society and promoting responsible global citizenry through practice that is student-centered, outcomes-based, and complementary to the institutional mission (Ludeman, 2001; Ludeman, et al, 2009; Zereik & Seeto, 2014). According to Ludeman et al (2009):

> For higher education to play its role in promoting ideals and values associated with a world culture of peace, it needs to become an agent of change, to respond to social needs and to promote the principles of solidarity and equity. One of the important ways to meet the challenges is to become more student-centered in all aspects of its activities, to encourage the development of a citizenry fully able to take its place on the community, national, regional and international stages. (p. 1)

The authors expressed peace and social justice as universal goals for higher education. Further, they emphasized student-centered student affairs practice as essential to these goals. While these values are not inherently harmful, they are Western values being purported as universal and necessary for the success of higher education globally. What happens when regions and countries attempt this form of higher education without centering their own cultural values, especially in contexts of Western-European imperialism?

African and Ghanaian Higher Education Context

In Sub-Saharan Africa, European imperialism and persistent Western influence coupled with the instability of governments, lack of economic infrastructure, and political corruption challenge the growth of higher education (Teferra & Altbach, 2004; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). World Bank and UNESCO policies and recommendations highlighted primary and secondary education as key to the economic and social growth devaluing higher education as a critical factor in a country's mobility; this position on education focus has since been reversed (Brock-Utne, 2003, Materu, 2006; UNESCO, 2003). As a result, *brain drain*, a phenomenon where the educated and skilled populace leaves their country of origin due to lack of opportunities, has alarmingly negative effects on the Sub Saharan Africa region (Jowi, 2009; Mohammadbhai, 2008).

For Ghanaian higher education, many of the same phenomena have occurred. Many of the public institutions were founded while Ghana was still under colonial rule; after the country's independence, many of the practices of these universities did not change to the new needs of the country (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; Effah, 2007; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). While some institutions were founded post-independence, these institutions are overwhelmingly private and religiously or otherwise affiliated with institutions outside of the country (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; Effah, 2007). Patrick Awuah founded Ashesi in 2002 as a private, non-profit institution that is neither religiously nor institutionally affiliated. (Awuah & Gouillart, 2009). Further, the *brain drain* that presents challenges for the African continent and the country of Ghana is low for graduates of Ashesi; more than 90% of its graduates remain on the continent of Africa after graduating (Ashesi Overview, 2015).

African and Ghanaian Context for Student Affairs

Much of the literature on student affairs practice on the continent of Africa is situated in the context of South Africa (Luescher-Mamashela, Moja, & Schreiber, 2013; Mandew, 2003; Moja et al., 2014). Student affairs in the South African higher education context has been well-documented and organized, by Western standards, with the creation of professional associations, conferences, and even a student services manual (Mandew, 2003; Moja et al., 2014). While the documentation of South African student affairs and services is a foundation to understanding country-specific student affairs practice, the professionalization of student affairs in South Africa cannot be generalized to the entire continent. Moja, Schreiber, and Luescher-Mamashela (2014) called for research about student affairs practice on the African continent contextualized to specific countries to account for "diversity in terms of higher education systems that have been shaped by colonial legacies, subsequent administrations, and global, local, and continental influences" (p. 1). The diversity of culture, higher education institutions, and histories compel cultural-specific student affairs research on the African continent (Luescher-Mamashela, Moja, & Schreiber, 2013; Moja et al., 2014).

As the professionalization of student affairs on the continent of Africa occurs, a study of models culturally informed by the countries in which the practice occurs warrants attention (Luescher-Mamashela, Moja, & Schreiber, 2013). Country and culturally specific philosophies, frameworks, and models of student affairs practice are worthy research topics in the context of the African continent. Ghana's rich cultural history and legacy as the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence from colonial rule make it an ideal country to investigate the country-specific contextualization of student affairs. In the only research study on student affairs practice in Ghana I could find, Boakye-Yiadom (2012) explored the perceptions of the work of

deans of students at four Ghanaian higher education institutions. Boakye-Yiadom (2012) found that the deans of students "perceived themselves as serving as parents to the student" (p. 106), which the author attributed to the chieftaincy culture in Ghana. Boakye-Yiadom (2012) underscored the possibility of balancing the chieftaincy culture of Ghana with the shift to student-centered, mission-based practice through student affairs and services, popularized through the U.S.-Western model of higher education.

Ashesi University Overview

Ashesi University is a private, nonprofit, liberal arts college in Berekuso located twenty miles north of Accra, Ghana (Ashesi Overview, 2015). Patrick Awuah, a former Microsoft program manager, founded Ashesi in 2002. (Ashesi Overview, 2015). Awuah left his job in the United States to return to his native Ghana and "contribute towards a renaissance in Africa" by combatting three main issues: "corruption, weak institutions, and the people who run them – the leaders" (Awuah, 2007, p. 1). As Awuah researched solutions to these issues, the need for ethical leadership with the ability to think critically, create solutions to problems, and communicate a vision for those solutions recurred. According to Awuah:

> I eventually decided to establish a university because I realized that one of the most fundamental problems in Ghana (and more broadly in Africa) was the problem of poor leadership – a problem I felt could be solved by changing the way leaders were educated (Cyr, 2016, p. 1).

He modeled Ashesi after his alma mater, Swarthmore College, in the United States crediting his leadership, communication, and critical thinking skills to the liberal arts curriculum (Awuah, 2007). Ashesi, which means *beginning* in the Ghanaian-Akan language, fuses the U.S.-Western model of higher education with the cultural-specific African-Ghanaian context to demonstrate an

intercultural, pluralistic approach that prepares its students for impacting the university community, Ghana, the continent of Africa, and the world (Ashesi Overview, n.d., p. 1).

As a student affairs researcher-scholar, what was of interest to me was the institution's emphasis on being a "student owned campus" (Student Life, n.d., p. 1). Students drafted the institutions' honor code and are responsible for holding their colleagues accountable to the code (Ashesi Overview, n.d.). The Office of Student and Community Affairs (OSCA) "expose…students to the life skills that will help them navigate adulthood, academia and professional life" (Kwakwa, n.d., p.1). Outside of the classroom, Ashesi's curriculum and institutional climate empowers students to be active contributors to their community on and off campus through clubs/organizations, student-led initiatives, and community service. The OSCA staff is small, but concentrates its efforts on student leadership, career services, health services, cultural appreciation, and student support (Student Life, n.d.). While none of the OSCA have formal student affairs training according to Western standards, they do have a unique practice that the dean of students called "student affairs practice from scratch" that is "intuitive" providing support for students efficiently and without losing personal touch (R. Kwakwa, personal communication, December 11, 2015). Ashesi's student-centered approach, commitment to holistic development of students, focus on preparing students for the globalized context in which they will enter, and the OSCA staff's support of the university mission create an ideal environment for a study of the contextualization of student affairs practice in the African-Ghanaian context.

Purpose Statement, Research Questions, and Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore student and community affairs at Ashesi University through a mission-centered, informal cultural lens. This research addressed the following questions:

1. How do the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs conceptualize student and community affairs at Ashesi University?
2. What strategies do the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs employ to enact student and community affairs?
3. How do other university constituents (faculty, students, administrators, and alumni) perceive OSCA staff members and the overall climate for student and community affairs at Ashesi University?

To understand the work of the OSCA staff at Ashesi, I used a qualitative case study methodology. Qualitative research focuses on the subjective experiences of participants, allowing their social world to be understood from their perspective (Liamputtong, 2010; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research participants are experts on the topic under study and provide insights into phenomena, especially under-researched phenomena and cross-cultural contexts (Liamputtong, 2010). Case study, the methodology for this study, is "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). In the case of this research, the bounded system is the OSCA staff at Ashesi University.

Boundaries of the Study

This research study explored the roles assumed by the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs at Ashesi University through the perspectives of the OSCA staff themselves and through the perspectives of other university constituents. Since this case study is

bounded by an institution (Ashesi University), this limits the application of case-specific contexts to other contexts in Ghana, to other contexts on the continent of Africa, and to other regions of the world. This study draws parallels to understanding the intercultural contextualization of student affairs practice globally from a U.S.-Western contextualization. Further, as the primary researcher and cultural outsider to Ghana and Ashesi, I relied on the responses of the participants in their descriptions of the role of OSCA staff at Ashesi. As stated previously, I triangulated data from the OSCA staff with data from other constituents to get an in-depth understanding of student affairs practice at Ashesi University.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this study, I will use the following terms and have provided a definition to guide their use:

- *Intercultural contextualization*: is the process by institutions decenter single cultural epistemologies and incorporate multiple epistemologies adapting them to the cultural context in the institution. For this research study, I am interested in how Ashesi contextualizes U.S.-Western student affairs practice for the African-Ghanaian context. In addition, I seek to understand elements of Ghanaian-African influences of student affairs practice.
- *Student and community affairs*: I will use this term to include all functional areas and units that support students in classroom learning at Ashesi University that are a component of the Office of Student and Community Affairs. I conceptualize student and community affairs practice at Ashesi as student-centered, intercultural, and part of the informal cultural education for students.

- *OSCA participants*: are full-time professional staff members who work in the Office of Student and Community Affairs at Ashesi University.
- *Non-OSCA participants* are Ashesi students, alumni, faculty and non-OSCA administrators.

Significance of the Study

This study provides a framework for the intercultural contextualization of student affairs practice rather than promoting centrism, particularly Eurocentrism, as a universal reality (Mbembe, 2016; Oluwagbemi-Jacob**,** 2001; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Further, this study will address the dearth of literature about student affairs practice outside of the U.S., in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in Ghana (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; Moja, et al. 2014). As such, student affairs concepts and practices can be actualized in a diversity of ways beyond the U.S.-Western conceptualizations. In addition, this study has the potential for better informing student affairs practitioners domestically and abroad of the importance of mission based practices and outcomes in the context of a private Ghanaian liberal arts institution. I view the work of the OSCA staff in fulfilling this mission as intercultural with the staff as informal cultural educators working in a student-centered model of practice.

Conclusion

In this introduction, I provided an overview of Ashesi University as the site for a qualitative case study on student affairs practice in Ghana, specifically, and on the continent of Africa, in general. With the expansion of the American-Western model of education comes the expansion of student affairs. Student affairs has evolved historically to be a mission-based, student-centered practice focused on the holistic development and academic success of students. Its evolution in American higher education has been about adapting to the changes in higher

education and the needs of student as well as institutions. For Sub Saharan Africa, the expansion of higher education has been slower than in other regions in the world, which consequently has affected student affairs. The literature on African student affairs is mostly centered on South African higher education. This dissertation attempts to answer the call for cultural-specific frameworks and institutional responses that can speak to the professionalization of student affairs on the continent of Africa. Ashesi University presents an excellent case study because of its founding as a response to Ghanaian reality and its structure as a general model for liberal arts education on the continent.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

…I made one picture of what nothing seemed
I shuddered in dumb terror
In silence screamed,
For now it seemed this I had dreamed;
How up from Hell, a land had leaped
A wretched land, all scorched and seamed
Covered with ashes, chained with pain
Streaming with blood, in horror lain
Its very air a shriek of death
And agony of hurt.
Anon I woke, but in one corner of my soul
I stayed asleep.
Forget I could not,
But never would I remember
That hell-hoist ghost
Of slavery and woe (DuBois, 1963, p. 2) …

In the following chapter, I review literature pertaining to the history and evolution of student affairs in United States (U.S.) and in the Ghanaian context of higher education. Using this literature as a foundation, I will provide an overview of Ashesi University and the Office of Student and Community Affairs as the setting for this qualitative case study. Because it exists as the foundation of our modern understanding of student affairs practice, I begin with a review of student affairs within higher education institutions in the U.S. Examining the history and evolution of student affairs practice in the U.S. context is important for this study for two reasons: Ghanaian higher education is modeled after the European-Western model of education and because U.S. student affairs practice demonstrates the profession's adaptability to the needs of U.S. higher education students.

Student Affairs in the American-United States Context of Higher Education

While the concept of higher education is not an invention of the United States (U.S.), student affairs, concerned with the lives of students in and out of the classroom, is attributed to the American-United States model of higher education (Leonard, 1956; Ludeman et al, 2009). The history and evolution of U.S. student affairs is embedded in the history and evolution of U.S. higher education from British higher education (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Geiger & Ferrante, 2015; Hirt, 2006; Leonard, 1956; Lucas, 2006; Nuss, 2003; Rudoph & Thelin, 1990). The flexibility and adaptability of student affairs demonstrates the profession's commitment to adapting to the changing needs of students and higher education institutions, from colonial colleges to present (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Leonard, 1956; Nuss, 2003). As the profession evolved, professional associations formed and guided the philosophy of practice and creation of functional areas (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Gerda, 2003; Nuss, 2003). Changing student demographics and growing enrollments signaled the need for an increase in the number and specialization of student affairs staff (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Nuss, 2003). Further, the diversification of institutional types, a herald of U.S. higher education, caused a similar diversification of student affairs organizational types (Kuk, 2016; Manning & Schuh, 2014). In this evolution, student affairs philosophy of practice has remained centered on the experiences of students, their holistic development, and supporting the academic learning of student through mission-based services and programs (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Nuss, 2003). In the following sections, I will discuss the evolution of student affairs philosophy from the colonial period of higher education to the current student learning philosophy.

The Colonial Period of Higher Education

The first student affairs professionals evolved from the work of faculty and administrators in ensuring the well-being and holistic education of students in colonial colleges (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Leonard, 1956). The founding of Harvard College in 1636 signaled the beginning of higher education in "British North America" (Geiger & Ferrante, 2015, p. 1). Since the United States of America would not be formed for another 100 years or more, the founding of Harvard College and other universities up until that point ushered in the *colonial period* of higher education (Nuss, 2003; Thelin & Gassman, 2011). This period is characterized by the formulation of higher education institutions in the British colonies prior to the founding of the country. Following Harvard College, eight other institutions formed to prepare a small portion of the population, mostly white males, as clergy who "assumed the status of gentlemen...expected to fill public offices in their community" (Geiger & Ferrante, 2015, p. 7). These institutions educated the elite and were modeled after the British model of education (Nuss, 2003; Thelin & Gassman, 2011). Known as the *Oxbridge model*, these institutions were known for "arranging several residential colleges within a university structure, all located in a pastoral setting" (Thelin & Gassman, 2011, p. 4). Operations of these institutions were chiefly the responsibility of the president, and secondarily the faculty (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Leonard, 1956). As such, faculty and administration determined the affairs of students in and out of the classroom (Geiger & Ferrante, 2015; Leonard, 1956; Nuss, 2003; Rudolph & Thelin, 1990; Thelin & Gassman, 2011). Even during this time, students clashed with faculty and administration due to their desire to have a say in their academics and activities (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Thelin & Gassman, 2011).

The *Deaning* of the Student Affairs Profession

In what Coomes and Gerda (2007) called the *deaning* of the profession, deans of men and women were appointed by presidents at institutions of higher education to support students' holistic development. This happened because of the realization that students needed additional support outside of the classroom, the introduction of the German research model of higher education, and the entrance of women into higher education (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Nuss, 2003). The combination of the German research model and the Oxbridge-residential model in the late 1800s resulted in faculty being expected to spend more time on research and teaching than on student welfare (Leonard, 1956; Nuss, 2003). These first deans, many of whom were faculty, were appointed to guide the holistic development of students beyond the classroom (Coomes & Gerda, 2007; Gerda, 2006). Their functions varied, but they were mentors, advocates, conduct officers, and confidants for students (Coomes & Gerda, 2016). Many of the first gatherings of these deans were to compare practices at institutions and establish best practices for their work that had little guidance and direction from their administration (Gerda, 2006). These gatherings set the foundation for the first professional associations that now guide the philosophy of the profession (Gerda, 2006).

Student Personnel and Services

With the turn of the 19th century and post-World Wars, vocationalism became an extension of the work of the first student affairs practitioners (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011). During this time, the first preparation program in student personnel work trained practitioners to guide students in their career development at Teacher's College of Columbia University (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011). *Student Personnel Point of View, 1937* (ACE, 1937) is often cited as one of the first documents of the student affairs profession.

SPPV espoused the first philosophy for student services, to support and guide student affairs practice (ACE, 1937). Student services emerged to attend to student's holistic development coordinated in conjunction with faculty and other administration and attend to the whole of a student's needs (ACE, 1937; 1949; Nuss, 2003). While ACE (1937) was concerned with defining the role of the student personnel worker, *Student Personnel Point of View 2* included the responsibility of the student in their educational process (ACE, 1949). Further, as it was written post-World War II, the authors of *SPPV 2* aptly advocated for civic and global responsibility to be part of the student's curriculum.

Faculty and administrators assumed that providing these services to students would create the desired outcomes of holistically developed, productive, responsible citizens. According to Nuss (2003), many of the first student personnel workers and their faculty forbearers operated *in loco parentis,* or in place of parents, and considered themselves as experts on the needs of students. Students continued to challenge the notion that their academic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular lives were to be planned and coordinated by administrators who made claims regarding their welfare (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Nuss, 2003).

Expansion of Student Affairs Philosophy to Student Development

Coupled with the social and political unrest of the 1960's and the influx of students into higher education through the G.I. Bill and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a new student demographic emerged to challenge the notion of *in loco parentis* that called for a new philosophy in student affairs practice (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Nuss, 2003). In addition to these changing policies, *Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students* outlined the responsibility of the student and the responsibility of the university in the educational process (AAUP, 1993). The *Joint Statement* document also encapsulated best

practices for ensuring student freedoms regarding higher education access, classroom learning, student records, student engagement and involvement opportunities, off-campus activities, and due process. The *Joint Statement* represented the first of many concerted efforts in promoting good practice in student affairs. Through the creation of policies and practices following the *Joint Statement* administrators and faculty changed the relationships between the university and the student. This change outlined the obligation and expectation of students and universities to each other and re-conceptualized the role of student affairs practitioners in the lives of students (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Nuss, 2003). The ambiguity of this reconceptualization led to the "professional identity crisis" (Coomes & Gerda, 2016, p. 17) for student affairs practitioners who were no longer operating *in loco parentis,* but in a contractual relationship with students.

On a parallel track increased accountability in higher education led to a new philosophy from student services to student development. In 1972, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) commissioned the *Tomorrow's Higher Education Project* (*T.H.E.)* to reform student affairs practice from a service model to a developmental model. In two parts, the authors of *T.H.E.* espoused the use of student development theory as the foundation for practitioners' creation of interventions and services for students (ACPA, 1975). By becoming student-centered, student affairs practitioners would be best equipped for helping institutions to align to developing students (ACPA, 1975). To develop these interventions, student affairs leaders developed the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) to create standards for student affairs work (Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Nuss, 2003). CAS outlined functional areas and how those areas should operate within an institutional context (CAS, 2015; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Nuss, 2003). As such, leaders organized the functional areas with hierarchical structures led by a vice president or equivalent (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Nuss,

2003). Student affairs leaders differentiated divisions and departments by reporting structures and functional areas (Hirt, 2006; Manning & Schuh, 2014; Nuss, 2003). Developmental theories provided an impetus for student affairs professionals to assess student needs and create interventions based on those needs (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2009; Nuss, 2003; Strayhorn, 2016). In addition to the interventions developed by practitioners, students' investment of energy into their educational experience should also be considered as part of input for student success (Astin, 1984). The student development philosophy, then, created a student-centered praxis for the student affairs field instead of faculty or administrator-centered and reiterated student affairs' commitment to the holistic development of students (Nuss, 2003).

A student-centered approach aligned with the creation of the student affairs field and earlier philosophy documents. The student affairs personal began incorporating student development theory into the services provided to students and curriculum designers (Nuss, 2003). As with the student personnel service philosophy, *student development* also had challenges in its implementation to practice. Bloland, Stamatkos, & Rogers (1994) argued that student affairs practitioners accepted student development philosophy without a comprehensive examination of its benefits and challenges citing a lack of empirical research in the validity of these theories. Further, they argued that human development occurs within and outside of the context of higher education, so it would be difficult to distinguish between the effects of student affairs on development and what would already be occurring for students. In addition, the changing landscape of the U.S. and higher education required more direct support for student learning outside of the classroom (Coomes & Gerda, 2016). Many student development theories were based on White, male, heterosexual, upper-class student populations and did not speak to the emerging diverse student demographics (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Dungy & Gordon, 2011;

Nuss, 2003). Student affairs, as it was beginning to be called, needed to be a more intentional partner in students' learning process supported through research and assessment measures.

Student Learning

The Student Learning Imperative encouraged student affairs leadership to incorporate a student learning ethos as part of their work (ACPA, 1994). Authors of the document espoused student learning as a campus-wide effort where student affairs complemented the intuitional academic mission, created intentional learning experiences for students, and evaluated student learning outcomes (ACPA, 1994). Different from the previous philosophies, student learning encouraged the whole campus to be part of the process of educating the whole student and cited development as part of the process not just the outcome of the educational process (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Nuss, 2003).

The philosophy of student learning incorporates previous philosophies of the field – student services and student development – and puts them into practice to support the academic mission of the university (NASPA & ACPA, 2004). Within the student learning philosophy, student affairs is not just relegated to the narrow practicality of providing services or the broadly defined development of students, but rather pulls both into a theory-based, measurable practice (Nuss, 2003). Further, student affairs practitioners are not just providers of services or obscure developers of students, but are intentional educators who support student learning through various roles (Winston, Creamer, & Miller, 2001). The student learning philosophy encourages the holistic development expressed by the foundational documents of the profession (ACE, 1937; 1949). Learning experiences should be integrated, transformative, and seamless (NASPA & ACPA, 2004). Student affairs practitioners are partners in the learning process with the

university community and learning is a shared responsibility rather than just regulated to in-classroom learning (Keeling, 2006; NASPA & ACPA, 2004; Nuss, 2003).

In a shared responsibility for student learning, student affairs practitioners should work within the mission of their institutions and work to support that mission to create seamless learning environments (Kuh, 1996; Strange & Banning, 2001). Kuh (1996) defined seamless as "…what was once believed to be separate, distinct parts (e.g., in-class and out-of-class, academic and non-academic, curricular and co-curricular, or on-campus and off-campus experiences) are now of one piece, bound together so as to appear whole or continuous" (p. 136). Student services should be based on the mission or mission-based, and directly linked with learning experiences in collaboration with faculty, administrators, staff, and students (Keeling, 2006; NASPA & ACPA, 2004).

The history and evolution of student affairs from the inception of higher education in the U.S. context demonstrate the flexibility and adaptability of the profession. As the needs of higher education and students changed, student affairs changed in order to serve students. The changing philosophy of student affairs practice demonstrated the need for the profession to espouse how practice should adapt to the needs of the institution and the needs of the student. The philosophy alone does not guide practice, but provides a framework that student affairs practitioners enact based on organizational structures and institutional types.

The Nature of Student Affairs Practice in the U.S. Context

While student affairs exists in many forms at institutions, the nature of student affairs practice in the U.S. context depends on institutional type and organizational models of student affairs practice (Hirt, 2006; Manning & Schuh, 2014). Hirt (2006) discussed seven types of institutions in her study about student affairs practice: liberal arts colleges, religiously affiliated

institutions, comprehensive colleges, research institutions, historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and community colleges. Hirt's study included the history, mission, types of faculty, students, and the nature of student affairs practice within these milieus.

Many of these institutions evolved from the liberal arts college and the evolution of the mission of the institutions were based on the needs of the locality, state, and region in which they were based (Hirt, 2006). For this reason, Hirt termed student affairs practitioners at liberal arts colleges as "standard bearers" (p. 19) for the profession. In particular, student affairs practitioners at liberal arts colleges concerned themselves with the holistic development of students (Hirt, 2006). Due to the size of the campus (usually less than 5000 students), these practitioners served in multiple roles for the campus. Practitioners worked closely with students in a collaborative, innovative, and progressive environment. Their work was meaningful: that is the intrinsic aspects of the work, especially when connected to the mission-vision, were emphasized more than extrinsic rewards (Hirt, 2006).

In addition to institutional type, *organizational models* of student affairs practice also influence student affairs practice in higher education. Manning and Schuh (2014) discussed the different organizational models of student affairs based on institutional types. They described three traditional models of student affairs practice (out-of-classroom, administrative, and learning-centered) and two innovative models (student and academic-centered) that guide student affairs practice based on institutional type and organizational culture. The traditional models of student affairs practice represent the evolution of student affairs from student services (administrative), student development (out-of-classroom), and student learning (learning-centered). Within the innovative models, student affairs leaders intentionally craft the vision,

mission, and operations with specific outcomes for staff, students and the institution embedded. The differentiation of institutional types and organizational models of student affairs practice are hallmarks of the American education system that are being replicated abroad.

Internationalization of Student Affairs

The U.S.-Western model of higher education, including student affairs and services, has been expanding globally since the 1960s. The replication of the U.S.-Western model has been due to its success in broadening access to higher education from a service for the elite to an opportunity for the general population (Trow, 2006). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the worldwide enrollment in higher education almost doubled from 1999 to 2013 (UNESCO-UIS, 2014). The increase during this timeframe is even more substantial in countries with a gross national product of less than $9,000 (USD); higher education enrollments in these countries have increased almost 200% (UNESCO-UIS, 2014). Also driving an increase in enrollment is the rhetoric of higher education as an essential component to being competitive in the global knowledge economy, building economic infrastructure, and creating industry for a country's populace beyond agriculture (British Council, 2012; Ludeman, 2001; Ludeman et al, 2009; Varghese, 2006). Authors of these public policies created and disseminated from the World Bank, UNESCO, and UCED emphasized higher education as a means of social mobility for these countries (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009; Yousef, 2014). Prior to the late 1990s, World Bank, UNESCO, and UCED stressed the importance of primary and secondary education as critical for countries to have a rate of return for their investment in education (Brock-Utne, 2003; Materu, 2006; Terferra & Altbach, 2004; World Bank, 2010). With the connection to the global economy and social

mobility, higher education is becoming critical for less privileged countries, many of which were exploited by countries of higher privilege (Altbach, 2004; Brock-Utne, 2003).

Following calls in the late 1990s by the World Bank, UNESCO personnel convened the World Conference on Higher Education for the purpose of "setting in motion a process of in-depth reform in higher education worldwide" (WCHE, 1998, p. 1). At this conference, attendees put forth the *World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vison and Action*, which advocated higher education as critical for the development of countries and societies. The *Declaration* prompted many sectors of higher education, particularly in the United States, to consider how they might contribute to the internationalization of higher education. In 2000, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) held an international symposium on student affairs and services. At the closing talk for the session, Dr. Mary-Louise Kearney who was the head of the UNESCO higher education division, articulated the need for a student affairs and services manual that could be shared widely for countries to adapt to their practices (Ludeman, 2001; Ludeman et al, 2009; Zereik & Seeto, 2014). The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) began as an informal conglomerate of student affairs practitioners from different countries organized for the development of this manual (Zereik & Seeto, 2014).

International Association for Student Affairs and Services (IASAS)

In 2002, IASAS collaborated with UNESCO in the creation of *The Role of Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education: A Practical Manual for Developing, Implementing, and Assessing Student Affairs Programmes and Services* to guide the growth of student affairs (UNESCO, 2002). This manual contained the universal tenets espoused for higher education in WCHE (1998) and communicated assumptions about student affairs practice, regardless of the

country. According to the manual, student affairs should contain partnerships with institutional, government, international constituents; be accessible to various populations; contribute to the holistic development of students supporting the mission of the institution in which it was operating; manage and use resources ethically and properly; and encourage practitioners to engage in assessment and evaluation according to learning outcomes. UNESCO (2002) also identified units that were part of student affairs, perpetuating U.S.-Western values of higher education and student affairs.

Building on the UNESCO (2002) and WCHE (1998), IASAS partnered with UNESCO again in 2009 for another document reiterating the crucial role that student affairs played in the development of higher education internationally (Ludeman et al, 2009). The authors also described student affairs as a concept emerging out of the U.S.-Western context and used it as a model for other student affairs units to emulate:

> Much of the rest of the world followed the European academic tradition, either because it was imposed by colonial rule or, as in the cases of Japan and Thailand, it was chosen freely. The main exception to this pattern was the United States which, from the beginning, was concerned with the non-classroom life of students. The idea of *in loco parentis*, that the university acts as a parent to its students, is at the base of this American tradition. Thus, from an early period, American colleges and universities took the extra-curricular life of students seriously. In the early days, professors were responsible for the students - later student affairs professionals took over this task (Ludeman, et al, 2009, p. xiii).

The authors also highlighted the evolution of student affairs in the U.S. context as a basis for countries seeking to build student affairs practice into higher education. Student affairs is

essential to higher education as it deals with the holistic development of students through mission-based practice and student-centeredness. While student affairs as a conception may be based on the American model of education, country-specific influences are needed to support the culture in which higher education institutions are based:

> Each country, as a unique sector of society, will have to bring its own traditions, culture, social infrastructure, and priorities into the development of this invaluable array of services and programmes; nevertheless, it is imperative that higher education include such services and programmes to promote quality of student life, meet student needs, and enhance student learning and success. The development of higher education must therefore recognize the importance of making allowance for national identities. (Luderman et al., 2009, p. 2)

While these are important considerations for student affairs work in international contexts, Ludeman et al (2009) reiterated the universality of the U.S.-Western conception of student affairs practice similar to UNESCO (2002).

In 2010, the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) became a formal consortium promoting culturally-informed, student-centered practice that complements institutional mission and supports students' holistic development (Zereik & Seeto, 2014). IASAS enacts its mission through professional development opportunities, publications, and advocacy work. The consortium is made up of student affairs practitioners who have built or are attempting to build student affairs and services at higher education institutions in their respective countries. Much like the evolution of higher education in the American context, the expansion of higher education globally influences the expansion of student affairs and services (Perozzi & Ramos, 2016). Global growth in higher education can be seen across almost every region in the world –

while there are regions where growth has been remarkable, Sub Saharan Africa has been the slowest in terms of higher education enrollment and completion (UNESCO-UIS, 2014).

Student Affairs in the African-Ghanaian Context of Higher Education

While the U.S.-Western model of education is proliferating globally, higher education is not a new concept for most of the world, especially on the continent of Africa. According to Lulat (2003), "given the high degree of resemblance between African and Western higher education institutions today, there is often the assumption that higher education in Africa is a Western colonial inventions" (p. 15). Institutions of higher education actually existed on the continent (Ajayi, Lameck, Goma, & Johnson, 1996; Lulat, 2003; 2005). These pre-colonial universities promoted the cultural and religious education of citizens and the storing of knowledge (Ajayi et al, 1996; Lulat, 2003; 2005; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Many of these institutions, still in existence today, were based on tenets of Islam and preservation of the Muslim faith (Lulat, 2003).

The European imperialism of the continent into colonies created the impetus for modern universities throughout the region (Lulat, 2003; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Initially, the belief in the intellectual inferiority of African people by the European colonists stymied any plan for a higher education institution (Lulat, 2003). However, a series of reports commissioned by the British and the United States post World War II amended previous stances against higher education on the continent (Lulat, 2003). Many of the first colonial institutions of higher education were religiously-based and served to indoctrinate Africans to Christianity (Lulat, 2003; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Other institutions were founded to create agents for colonial administration and was regulated, much like higher education in America, for the elite (Ajayi et al, 1996; Lulat, 2003; 2005; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013).

Independence from colonial rule for Sub Saharan Africa, which began first in Ghana in 1957, ushered in a new role for higher education institutions: decolonization and Africanization (Mbembe, 2016; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Education, in general, became a governmental priority as a conduit for building the economies of the countries and creating an educated populace. Higher education proved to be an expensive venture, in particular for less privileged countries exploited by European colonialism. Lenders and policy-influencers, like the World Bank and UNESCO, stressed the importance of primary and secondary education and its higher return on investment than higher education (Brock-Utne, 2003; Lulat, 2003; Manteru, 2006; Mohammadbhai, 2008; World Bank, 1988). Further, the infrastructure did not support the educated talent who begin to leave the continent as they searched for employment and better opportunity in what is known as *brain drain* (Jowi, 2009; Mohammadbhai, 2008).

The vestiges of colonialism, political corruption, and lack of infrastructure are often cited as reasons for the brain drain and continued crisis for the continent of Africa (Teferra & Altbach, 2004; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Higher education leaders can help to reframe this narrative, but the lack of financial backing coming with the change in policies by the World Bank, UNESCO, and others is slow and has many parameters (Brock-Utne, 2003). Using these policies, UNESCO and World Bank called for the diversification of higher education in the region to compete with the global knowledge economy (Materu, 2006; Mohamedbhai, 2008; World Bank, 2009). The U.S.-Western model of higher education in Sub Saharan Africa is popular, but true transformation in the higher education sector needs contextualization of higher education for and by the continent (Aina, 2010; Brock-Utne, 2003; Materu, 2006). Aina (2010) stressed this sentiment in his address to the African Studies Association:

> No outsider can do this for African countries; no donors can do this for them either. African governments, businesses and interest groups must determine whether they genuinely need universities and higher education institutions that express excellence and equity, and they must mobilize the necessary resources needed for such a transformation (p. 24).

In order for African higher education to meet the needs of the continent broadly and the specific countries in which institutions operate, the curriculum, faculty, administration, and co-curriculum must be transformed by African higher education leaders (Aina, 2010; Luescher-Mamashela, Moja, & Schreiber, 2013; Moja, Schreiber, Luescher-Mamashela, 2014). This study, in particular, will explore how Ashesi is transforming student affairs for the African continent and for the country of Ghana.

Student Affairs in the African Context

Similar to the U.S. context, the professionalization of student affairs on the continent of Africa has adapted with the needs of students (Moja, Schreiber, & Lueschers-Mamashela, 2014). While some exceptions exist, student affairs has been a slow part of professionalization as those doing student services work vary by institution and country (Carpenter & Haber-Curran, 2013; Moja et al., 2014; Selznick, 2013). Student affairs practice in the context of South Africa has been the most documented and shown the most growth over the past twenty years, according to U.S.-Western standards (Grayson, 2014; Mandew, 2003; Moja et al., 2014). The growth in student affairs practitioners has resulted in the refining of student affairs at South African universities into functional areas similar to that of the U.S.-Western model, creation of professional associations, and the creation of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* (Luescher-Mamashela, Moja, Schreiber, 2013; Mandew, 2003; Tshiwula, 2013). To address the need for

country-specific research, Moja, Schreiber, and Luescher-Mamashela (2014) discussed the need to contextualize student affairs to account for "diversity in terms of higher education systems that have been shaped by colonial legacies, subsequent administrations, and global, local, and continental influences" (p. 1). Ghana's rich cultural history and legacy as the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence from colonial rule make it an ideal country to investigate the country-specific contextualization of student affairs.

Ghanaian Higher Education and Student Affairs

Much of the literature about higher education in Ghana, known before the independence in 1957 as Gold Coast, begins with the establishment of colonial education systems through trading companies and missionary churches (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; Effah, 2003; George, 1976; Nkrumah, 1943; Okrah, 2003). Despite the preeminence of Eurocentric assumptions, cultural, tribal, and ethnic education systems did previously exist and helped to guide the acculturation of individuals toward societal expectations (Okrah, 2003). Similar to the history of higher education in many other African countries, institutions in Ghana began as the result of reports commissioned by the colonial government to investigate the need and purpose of such institutions in the country (Effah, 2003). The institutions established during the colonial period to provide training for the elite as colonial agents were modeled after the British higher education system (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; Effah, 2003). In Ghana, these institutions – University College of the Gold Coast, later renamed University of Ghana, and Kumasi College of Technology, later renamed the Kwame Nkrumah Institute of Technology -- were founded in 1948 and 1951 by the British colonial governments.

After the independence from British colonial rule in 1957, Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, created the Accelerated Development Plan to create a mass compulsory education

system to increase the country's literacy rate as part of the country's decolonization (Dodoo, 2012; Ntim, 2014). Formal and informal education were important in decolonization efforts in so much as it decentered European ideals, re-centers "the African point of view" (Okrah, 2003, p. 19) and created a national identity (Nkrumah, 1943). As such, the institutions created during the colonial period of the country needed reform in order to change the students from colonial agents to nationalists for Ghana (Effah, 2003; 2007). With the compulsory education system, an additional need for teachers emerged, which led to the founding of the University College of Cape Coast, later University of Cape Coast in 1962 (Effah, 2003). Following the founding of the University of Cape Coast, four additional public universities – (a) Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, (b) University for the Development Studies, (c) University of Education, Winneba, and (d) University of Mines and Technology – were founded to fulfill the higher education needs for the country (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012). With the economic decline in the 1970's and 1980's, government support of higher education reduced, leading to the need for outside funds to help support higher education (Effah, 2003). As such, Ghana's higher education system was also affected by the World Bank funding and UNESCO policy of focusing on primary and secondary education (Brock-Utne, 2003; Effah, 2003; Materu, 2006; Terferra & Altbach, 2004; World Bank, 2010).

To fulfill the demand for higher education that public education could not meet, the private education sector in Ghana began to grow (Ntim, 2014). According to the National Council for Tertiary Education in Ghana, there are 51 private institutions and eight public universities (NCTE, 2013). Private institutions fulfill the demand for higher education unfulfilled by the public sector, contribute to the economic growth of the country, and fulfill the need for diversity in curriculum and institutional type (Ntim, 2014). Many private institutions have a

religious affiliation, are a branch campus of an institution outside of Ghana, and/or promote some particular trade or skill for students (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; Effah, 2007). Even still, unemployment rates for university graduates are among the highest in the Sub Saharan region, with only 2% of the graduates able to find employment post-graduation (Ntim, 2014). As a result, university graduates remain unemployed, underemployed, or go abroad for work, contributing to talent loss for the country or *brain drain* (Jowi, 2009; Mohammadbhai, 2008; Ntim, 2014). Similar to the burgeoning area of higher education in Ghana, student affairs frameworks contextualized for the country are warranted.

According to Boakye-Yiadom (2012): "there is almost no data on student affairs in Ghanaian higher education" (p. 48). His study on the dean of students at four institutions was the only study on student affairs practice that I could find. Boakye-Yiadom (2012) researched the perceptions of the deans, the students, the faculty, and the administrators of student affairs and services at four Ghanaian institutions. The Dean of students at these institutions perceived themselves as authority figures in a students' life that staff members described as "a father-son relationship in a family setting" (p. 137). The deans saw their role as “family head with many children to care for...a parent and a disciplinarian, making sure students remain respectful to authority" (p. 137). Other university constituents – including students, staff, and faculty – echoed these same perceptions, expressing that the deans were more responsible for "issues of discipline and morality than student involvement and success" (p. 140). Similar to the U.S.-Western evolution of student affairs, students in the study expressed that this *in loco parentis*-type relationship was problematic, although some had been helped by the dean of students’ office. The students desired a more collaborative, student-centered, and progressive student services. Boakye-Yiadom (2012) discussed the chieftaincy as the traditional leadership culture of the

country and how it influenced everyone's perceptions of the dean of students' role. He argued for a balance in student affairs practice that honored Ghanaian-African culture on one hand with student-centered, mission-based values on the other.

Ghanaian higher education and student affairs are still growing and being defined by the needs of the country. Prior to colonial rule, an informal system of education existed to teach children their role in their families, clan, and tribes through gender-specific and apprenticeship systems (Nkrumah, 1943; Okrah, 2003). Within the colonial system of education, education was formalized to benefit the colonial government and was an elite system of education designed to produce colonial agents (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; Effah, 2003; 2007; George, 1976; Nkrumah, 1943; Okrah, 2003). Following independence in 1957, Nkrumah made education reform a priority calling for institutions that supported decolonization and economic growth for the country facilitated through his Accelerated Development Plan for compulsory and free education (Dodoo, 2012; Ntim, 2014). The economic hardship experienced in the 1970's and 1980's led to a decline in funding for public education. As a result, the growth of private education has diversified higher education and filled the gap left by public institutions (Ntim, 2014). Still, higher education has not caused the economic growth as expected with much of university graduates being unemployed or underemployed causing a *brain drain* for Ghana like other countries in the Sub Saharan region. The student affairs and services segment of University life in Ghana is growing, but research on the role of student affairs personal in complementing Ghanaian higher education is needed (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012).

Ashesi University's mission is focused on transforming Ghana and the African continent through higher education. Ninety percent of its graduates have remained on the African

continent. Understanding student affairs and services at Ashesi can provide insight about student needs and how institutions of higher education might respond to those needs.

Setting for the Study: Ashesi University

In the 1990's, Patrick Awuah had a vision for the future of Ghana directly tied to higher education and creating an economic infrastructure that supported university graduates. Awuah left Ghana as a teenager and was educated at Swarthmore College in the United States (Biography, 2016; Dutheirs & Ellis, 2013). After college Awuah worked for the Microsoft Corporation as a program manager, when his first child was born he realized "that Africa mattered" (Awuah, 2012, p. 18) and began thinking about how he could help improve the conditions in his native country and the African continent (Awuah, 2007; Biography, 2016; Cyr, 2016). In his research on Ghana, Awuah identified three main issues in building the country's infrastructure: "corruption, weak institutions, and the people who run them – the leaders" (Awuah, 2007, p. 1). In addition, he recognized that there was a lack of solution-oriented ethical leadership, moreover, higher education institutions were "overcrowded and underfunded" (Awuah, 2012, p. 18). Not only in Ghana but also across the continent there was a leadership deficit.

Seeing the need for inspiring the next generation of ethical leaders, Awuah quit work at Microsoft to go back to school to earn a business degree from the University of California, Berkeley to gain the knowledge for founding a university (Biography, 2016; Dutheirs & Ellis, 2013). For Awuah (2012), "Africa needed a new kind of university, and in 2000 I resolved to create it" (p. 18). Using his resources and contacts from Microsoft, Swarthmore College, the University of California-Berkeley, and the University of Washington, Awuah conceived Ashesi

University, which opened for its first class of 30 students in the fall of 2002 (Awuah, 2012; Awuah & Gouillart, 2009).

Since that time, Ashesi's enrollment has increased to over 600 students from various countries in Africa as well as students from the United States and China (Ashesi Overview, 2015). The mission of Ashesi, which is Ghanaian-Akan for *beginning*, is to create the next generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders for and from the continent of Africa (Ashesi Overview, 2015). Ashesi fulfills their mission through a liberal arts curriculum designed to foster students' critical thinking, communication, and leadership ability (Ashesi University, n.d.). Each year, students participated in a leadership seminar that focused on different aspects of leadership that features leadership exploration activities, guest speakers, and community services (Redden, 2007). In addition to its liberal arts and African studies curriculum, Ashesi offers four bachelor programs – engineering, business administration, computer science, and management information systems (Ashesi University, n.d.).

In addition to classroom learning, the vision-mission of Ashesi extends to "out of classroom" life. The literature promoting Ashesi describes "a student owned campus" (Student Life, n.d., p. 1) where students thrive outside of the classroom in a variety of activities and initiatives. Unlike students at the institutions discussed by Boakye-Yiadom (2012), students created the Honor Code, are responsible for socializing new students, and are integral in enforcing it for the student body. In addition, Ashesi has an active and vibrant student life that is managed by the Office of Student and Community Affairs (OSCA). The OSCA is separated into three main areas: dean of students office, career services office, and community engagement office. Figure 1 shows the reporting structure for the Office of Student and Community Affairs at Ashesi University.

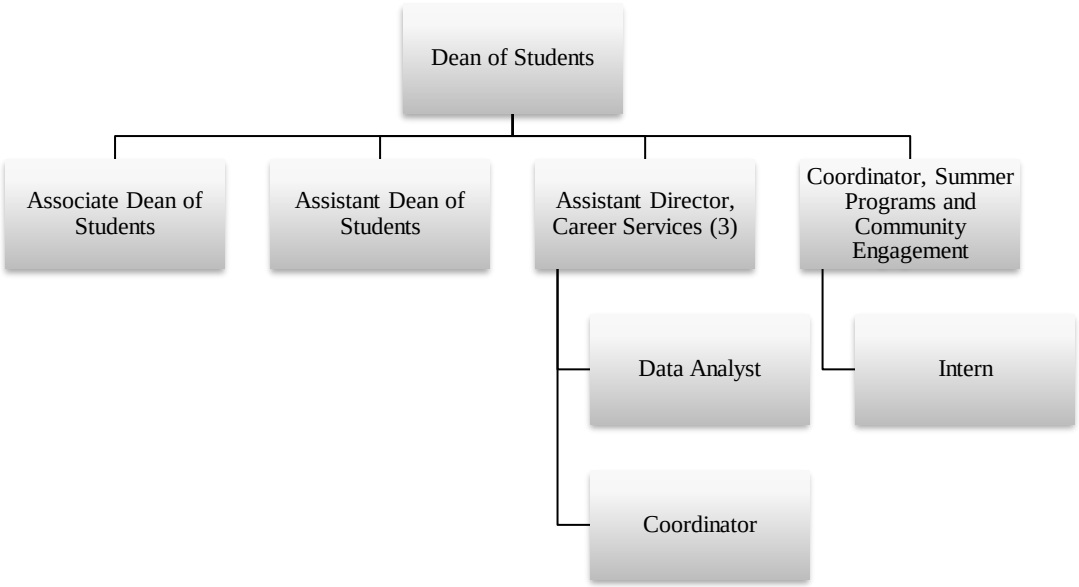

Figure 1. Organizational Structure for the Office of Student and Community Affairs at Ashesi University during the time of my visit in October 2016.

Generally, OSCA staff support students in transition, lead an orientation to the university, promote student activities and leadership, provide career services and development, review student conduct, and provide student support and community engagement. According to the Dean, OSCA "expose our students to the life skills that will help them navigate adulthood, academia and professional life" (Kwakwa, n.d., p.1). None of the OSCA staff are formally trained in the Western model student affairs, but practice what the dean of students called "student affairs practice from scratch" that is "intuitive" providing support for students efficiently and without losing touch (R. Kwakwa, personal communication, December 11, 2015).

During my visit to Ashesi in December 2015, I was inspired by its bold mission, student-centered focus, and concern for the holistic development and success of students. Student affairs practice at Ashesi through the work of the OSCA staff supported the overall campus mission. While Ashesi borrows from the U.S.-Western model of higher education, they have contextualized elements – like the liberal arts curriculum, leadership program, program

outcomes, and administration structure – for the needs of Ghana, while emphasizing African cultural heritage. Similarly, student affairs at Ashesi is influenced by the U.S.-Western model of higher education, but the practice is grounded in the context and reality of students' unique needs and in supporting their academic success. Ashesi's founding as a response to African-Ghanaian reality and its bold, student-centered mission makes it an ideal site to study country-specific student affairs practice as espoused by Moja et al., (2014). This *intercultural contextualization* of the U.S-Western model of higher education for the Ghanaian-African culture makes it an ideal site for researching student affairs practice.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed literature about the history and evolution of student affairs in the U.S.-Western and Ghanaian-African context of higher education. The literature review demonstrates how higher education adapts to the changes in society and the needs of students (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; Nuss, 2003; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). I also provided an overview of the founding and operations of Ashesi University and the Office of Student and Community Affairs, which will be the setting for this qualitative study. For Ghana and Africa in general there is a need for research on current practices in student affairs and services (Luescher-Mamashela, Moja, Schreiber, 2013; Moja et al., 2014).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH APPROACH

…I lived and grew, I worked and hoped
I planned and wandered, gripped and coped
With every doubt but one that slept
Yet clamoured to awaken.
I became old; old, worn and gray;
Along my hard and weary way
Rolled war and pestilence, war again;
I looked on Poverty and foul Disease
I walked with Death and yet I knew
There stirred a doubt: Were all dreams true?
And what in truth was Africa?
One cloud-swept day a Seer appeared,
All closed and veiled as me he hailed
And bid me make three journeys to the world
Seeking all through their lengthened links
The endless Riddle of the Sphinx.
I went to Moscow; Ignorance grown wise taught me Wisdom;
I went to Peking: Poverty grown rich
Showed me the wealth of Work
I came to Accra (DuBois, 1963, p. 2) …

In the following chapter, I outline my research approach to the following research questions: (a) How do the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs conceptualize student and community affairs? (b)What strategies do the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs employ to enact student and community affairs? And (c) How do other university constituents (faculty, students, administrators, and alumni) perceive student and community affairs at Ashesi University? This chapter includes my perspective as a researcher interested in student affairs, the methodology, data analysis, and data authenticity plan.

Researcher Paradigm and Perspective

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument for data analysis and interpretation (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995). As such, Bentz & Shapiro (1998) argued for *mindful inquiry* in research, which "is always carried out by an individual with a life and a *lifeworld* [emphasis in original] …all of which affect the research" (p. 4). By making my positionality and subjectivities known, I am better able to see "how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data" (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). My research perspective is influenced by my social and cultural identity, educational training, and personal and professional experiences (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Crotty, 1998; Merriam, 2009). I identify as a Christian, African-American ascendant, cisgender, woman who is a student affairs scholar-practitioner. All of my educational and work experiences have been in the United States of America. I have worked in higher education and student affairs for the past nine years in various functional areas including residence life, student activities, diversity programs, and assessment and evaluation. In particular, I center student affairs inquiry (using assessment, evaluation, and research) as critical to my practice as a reflexive scholar practitioner (Ryder & Kimball, 2015). My research, as a doctoral student, has focused on the experiences of new student affairs practitioners, their socialization, and their use of theory in their practice.

This research study evolved from a study abroad trip to Ghana in December 2015. As I was considering a research project from the trip, I began to explore student affairs practice at institutions of higher education in Ghana. During this search, Ashesi University consistently emerged as a model of student-centered student affairs practice. My intrinsic interest in Ashesi University is due to its novel and ambitious mission as well as my experiences as an undergraduate to full-time professional in student affairs at various American liberal arts

institutions (Stake, 1995). My interest became the beginnings of this research project, and since my time in Ghana I have examined my researcher perspective and research paradigm (Martin, in press).

Research Paradigm Overview

According to Rossman and Rallis (2012), the term *paradigm* is used "to capture the idea that definitions of science (whether natural or social) are the products of shared understandings of reality, that is, worldviews – complete, complex ways of seeing and sets of assumptions about the world and actions within it" (p. 35). Similarly, Mertens (2010) defined paradigm as "a way of looking at the world…composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action" (p. 7). Researcher paradigms includes their epistemology, ontology, and axiology and influences the methodology for a research study (Mertens, 2010). Researchers should discover and make known their paradigms due to how their worldview influences the research process (Dillard, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Mertens, 2010; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Problematizing Paradigms

While examining and discussing one's paradigm is essential to research, Dillard (2006a) argued that researchers seldom question what she called the "Big Four paradigms: positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism" (p. 60). Rather, researchers "are very subtly encouraged to 'ascribe' (or subscribe?) to a particular one of the Big Four paradigms—and conduct ourselves according to the theoretical precepts outlined within them" (Dillard, p. 61). Researchers, no matter their cultural background, adapt their research and their own worldview to fit these paradigms. She maintained that the issue was not a "proliferation of paradigms" (Dillard, p. 62) as suggested by other researchers concerned with the increase in paradigms, but

an issue of power and politics in the legitimacy of research that affects scholars of color. The diversity of worldviews is not considered legitimate because they do not fit into the Big Four paradigms and perpetuate research through paradigms. Dillard (2006a) called for researchers to examine the paradigm, which is inherently cultural and as such

> we must recognize the omnipresent ways in which *every* [emphasis in original] *researcher* positions self as knower and teller of research stories. Such a notion inherently holds the assumption *that there is and will always be* [emphasis in original] as much paradigm proliferation as there are new and interesting people engaging in educational research (p. 64).

Dillard (2006a) suggested that researchers examine their own paradigms, embrace the same process for other researchers, and discuss the implications of their paradigms to their research. In summarizing her endarkened feminist epistemology, Dillard acknowledged black feminism as a foundation to her way of knowing along with seeing "research as a responsibility" (Dillard, 2006b, p. 5) rather than a proliferation of paradigms. My trip to Ghana in December 2015 gave me an opportunity to examine and problematize my paradigm.

Understanding My Researcher Perspective in Ghana

Prior to the Ghana trip, I situated myself in the constructivist paradigm without questioning or examining my perspective as encouraged by Dillard (2006a). The constructivist paradigm evolved from positivist and post-positivist research traditions where researchers considered their research as a search for absolute truth that could be found through objective, controlled, measures (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Constructivists reject this view instead believing "that a goodly portion of social phenomena consists of the meaning-making activities of groups and individuals around those phenomena"

(Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 167). Choosing a paradigm from the major traditions seemed an arbitrary, but necessary, rite of passage during the doctoral process. I chose constructivism because it was close to my worldview, but my trip to Ghana helped me to explore and articulate my researcher paradigm more clearly. In Martin (in press), I discussed different aspects of the study abroad trip, my perspective on those experiences, and analysis of my journal entries from this trip to examine my researcher perspective. I articulate my researcher perspective in terms of an ontology of seeing, an epistemology of feeling, and an axiology of belief.

Ontology of seeing. I view a phenomenon as real only as much as it can be sensed using one of the five senses, namely the senses of sight and sound. As such, my ontology is one of seeing and I believe that the "beginning of knowledge" (Martin, in press, p. 19) begins with sensing phenomena. For example, I first *sensed* Ashesi through a discussion with a colleague, Peter Maribei, who had previously worked with college students in Kenya. He shared Ashesi as a model for student affairs and services in Ghana research on Ghanaian higher education and discussions with scholars who have worked in higher education on the continent (P. Maribei, personal communication, June 19, 2015). In my attempt to gain "the confirmation of understanding" (Martin, in press, p. 19), I gather as many different perspectives on the sensed phenomena as possible. In the case of Ashesi, this meant I gathered as much information as possible from websites, discussions with Dr. Michael Boakye-Yiadom, discussions with the dean of students, and my visit to Ashesi itself.

Epistemology of feeling. While reality is sensed and confirmed through understanding multiple constructions of reality (as in constructionism) my epistemology is feeling. When I first visited Ashesi, I had the feeling of *déjà vu* as if I had experienced being on the campus prior to the initial visit. As I described in chapter 1, I thought I was dreaming of Ashesi again as I had

been since learning about the institution. However, Ashesi became known when it was sensed, confirmed through understanding multiple perspectives, and known through feeling. For me, phenomena can be sensed and understood as real, however it may not always be felt or known. Conversely, phenomena can never be known without first being sensed and understood. My epistemological perspective is highly intuitive and contextual, based on feeling, and grounded in the acknowledgement and incorporation of the multiple realities. As such, my paradigm is encompassed within a larger structure of belief in the connections between and within phenomena.

Axiology of belief. The movement of reality to knowledge is a spiritual process of incorporating sensed phenomena into my axiology of belief. While I acknowledge the multiplicity of realities and truths, my perspective is a cultural spiritual extension of my Christian faith and identity as an African-American woman. I view faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1, King James Version). This is not a unique approach, but is part of a cultural research framework put forth by African-American scholars who emphasized the spiritual realm in their research (e.g. Cannon & Morton, 2015; Cozart, 2010; Dillard, 2006a/b; Mattis, 2002; Means & Jaeger, 2016; Okpalaoka & Dillard, 2012). These research frameworks are both acts of resistance and resilience in a scholar community that privileges epistemologies, especially those that view the mind, spirit and body as different entities that can be separated (Dillard, 2006b). I view these aspects of self as whole and to deny one part of the self – mind, body, spirit, or any other part – is to be incomplete and unable to fully engage with knowledge.

The trip to Ghana and this resulting research has helped me embrace my identity as an African-American ascendant, cisgender, woman scholar. Prior to the trip to Ghana, I identified

solely as Black feeling disconnected from a cultural or national heritage. I longed for a place, a cultural home. While in Ghana, I did see so many connections and felt that through, cultural memory, I could identify with the African diaspora (Dillard, 2006b). Surprisingly, I also felt, for the first time, the national heritage of being American. I often attempted to impose my American identity – expectation of prompt and responsive wait staff, adherence to time schedules, focus on the individual – while in the country. In my concern with the influence of my American-Western identity on this research, I will keep a research journal and enlist peer reviewers, which I will discuss in the next section: research design.

Research Design

Research design is a series of justifications and decisions by the researcher aligning their perspective with the research topic, research questions, and related literature (Carter & Little, 2007). In aligning my researcher perspective and the research questions, I decided that qualitative research is the ideal research approach for this study for several reasons. First, my research questions focus on the subjective experiences of the OSCA staff and other constituents, centering their perspective on their social world. According to Merriam (2009), "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 13). I focus my research questions on the perceptions of the participants, OSCA staff and others, about the work of the OSCA staff. Qualitative research is ideal to explore this meaning-making about the work of OSCA staff at Ashesi University. As (I am myself) the instrument of research collection and analysis, I will use an interpretivist lens to answer the research questions of this study (Prasad, 2005).

In addition to examining the subjective experiences of participants, I also use qualitative research as a tool for cross-cultural research. Liamputtong (2010) advocated the importance of qualitative research a means to better understand the culture in which the phenomenon of interest occurs. Liamputtong stated:

> But how we do acquire this culturally appropriate knowledge from individuals who come from different cultural backgrounds? It is only through qualitative enquiry which allows the researchers to work closely with the participants, and which allows them to build trust and rapport with them; the participants have their opportunities to articulate their needs and concerns in great depth (p. 8).

As an African American, I share a cultural connection with the country of Ghana, the Sub Saharan region, and the continent of Africa due to the transatlantic slave trade, but still need to understand the culture in which this research will be conducted. As such, I use qualitative research to understand the participants' experiences as well as to gain knowledge about the cultural context in which their work occurs.

Finally, there is very little research on the topic of this research study – exploring the conceptualizations and descriptions of student affairs at Ashesi University through the work of OSCA staff. As such, I use qualitative research for this study "to establish an empathetic understanding for the reader through description, sometimes *thick description* [emphasis in original], conveying to the reader what experience itself would convey" (Stake, 1995, p. 39). I view the research participants as experts on the topic under study who can provide insights into phenomena (Liamputtong, 2010). This *thick description* from the participants will be the focus of my data collection methods for the study. Within the qualitative research tradition, I will use case study methodology for this study. Three frameworks guide my lens for the design of this study:

student-centered student affairs practice, intercultural contextualization, and informal cultural education, which I review in the next section.

Student-Centered Models of Practice

Hirt (2006) described student affairs practitioners at liberal arts colleges as the "standard bearers" (p. 19) of the profession in the U.S. context as liberal arts colleges were among the first higher education institutions in the country. Due to the size of these institutions, student affairs practitioners work closely with students and other university constituents in the creation and implementation of programs and services (Hirt, 2006). When combined with the student-centered model of student affairs practice, the liberal arts institution is an environment that is collaborative, innovative, and progressive (Manning & Schuh, 2014). The foci of student-centered models of student affairs practice are supporting students, integrating students into the campus through involvement and engagement opportunities, and empowering the students to have active participation in all elements of the campus (Manning & Schuh, 2014). Ashesi University espouses this student-centered value through OSCA noting that "campus life is owned and managed by students themselves" (Student Life, n.d., p. 1). This student-centeredness at Ashesi provides an excellent setting to explore how student affairs practice is contextualized between U.S.-Western and Ghanaian-African cultures.

Intercultural Contextualization

Almost two decades before Ghana became the first country in Sub Saharan Africa to declare independence from British colonial rule, its founding father and first president, Kwame Nkrumah wrote about the need for interculturalism in education. According to Nkrumah (1943), "the best in western culture should be combined with the best in African culture…only on this ground can Africa create a new and distinct civilization in the process of world advancement" (p.

38-39). While this interculturalism will inevitably create crisis and conflict, Nkrumah emphasized this approach as an antecedent of progress and innovation, particularly for the continent of Africa. Interculturalism is a way of thinking about culture where individuals learn and appreciate cultures in the context in which no one culture dominates (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Oluwagbemi-Jacob**,** 2001; Tanaka, 2002). Within this framework, educators decenter hegemonic epistemologies and intentionally incorporate ways of knowing, philosophies, and theoretical approaches that are central to decolonization efforts (Oluwagbemi-Jacob**,** 2001). Following decolonization, leaders of many African countries, like Ghana, sought to "Africanize" (Mbembe, 2016, p. 13) institutions of higher education founded during colonialism as these institutions "were products of European colonial settings which did not represent the needs, interests and values of African people" (Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck, 2013, p. 39). This process of lessening Eurocentricity and incorporating African thought is conceptualized by Woldergiorgis and Doevenspeck (2013) as *contextualization:*

> Contextualization basically implies that there is nothing wrong with having European models of higher education but what is missing is African knowledge. Thus, African higher education institutions should do more research on African problems if possible in collaboration with the rest of the world (pp. 39-40).

Central to interculturalism is communication, dialogue, and problem-solving, skills that Ashesi espouses for its university community (Awuah, 2012; Oluwagbemi-Jacob**,** 2001). In committing to these values, Ashesi is actualizing the "pluriversity" (Mbembe, 2016, p. 36), which is an institution where multiple epistemologies inform knowledge and innovation transcending the academic discipline division that dominates the U.S.-Western context of higher education. I combine the concepts of interculturalism and contextualization as *intercultural contextualization*

or the process by which institutions decenter single cultural epistemologies and incorporate multiple epistemologies adapting them to the cultural context in the institution.

Informal Cultural Education

Within this formal context of higher education as a platform for teaching interculturalism, informal cultural educators are integral to facilitating students' understanding of their role within society and how they can impact change in their communities, particularly in Ghanaian culture (Okrah, 2003). Cultural education preceded higher education in the form of "secret societies and initiation ceremonies" (Nkrumah, 1943, p. 33) that guided the individuals' acculturation of individuals into society expectations (Okrah, 2003). While colonialism's impact lessened cultural education, it nonetheless is still incorporated in oral traditions, songs, and rites of passage for Ghana's ethnic groups (Okrah, 2003). The mission of Ashesi – to inspire the next generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders for and by the African continent – posits its role in the informal cultural education of students. OSCA staff's role in this informal education is significant as it happens outside of formal learning environments. Each of these frameworks guided the decisions on using a qualitative case study approach for this research. These frameworks guided how I formulated interview protocol questions and the observation guides that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Case Study Methodology

I chose the terminology of methodology purposefully as "the justification for the methods of the research project" (Carter & Little, 2007, p. 1317). In education, there are three expert perspectives on case study methodology –those of Robert Yin, Sharan Merriam, and Robert Stake (Yazan, 2015). Each of these authors has an epistemological approach to case study research with unique attention to the research design and data validation.

Yin's research strategy. Yin defines case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). This distinguishes case study research as an option for researchers who want to study a phenomenon, but cannot manipulate variables like in quantitative research or are not study a historical set of events. Further, the use of case study is to "cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study" (p. 13). For Yin (2003), case study can be a single case or multiple case designs that are either holistic (single unit of analysis) or embedded (multiple units of analysis). Yin argued for case study to be considered a legitimate form of research in the social sciences and emphasized the importance of objective research design and data validation in having a rigorous, "high-quality case study" (p. 57). While the contextual elements of Yin's perspective on case study pairs with the conceptual framework of this study, Yin's focus on data validation and objectivity indicate a post-positivistic orientation to research, and does not permit a flexibility in research that I envision for this study (Martin, in press, Yazan, 2015).

Stake's case study research methods. Unlike Yin, Stake (1995) discussed the importance of epistemology for qualitative researchers. For Stake, the constructivist and existential or nondeterministic "views are common accompanists to an expectation that phenomena are inextricably related through many coincidental actions and that understanding them requires looking at a wide sweep of contexts: temporal and spatial, historical, political, economic, cultural, social, and personal" (p. 43). Within the case study method, Stake described the importance of this epistemological approach of connecting the individuals' meaning-making of socially constructed phenomena with their actions within that phenomena. From his

background of program evaluation, Stake defined case study as "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstance" (p. xi) where "the qualitative researcher emphasizes episodes of nuance, the sequentiality of happenings in context, the wholeness of the individual" (p. xii). For Stake, it is the uniqueness or *particularity* of a case is paramount to studying a phenomena of interest. In addition, Stake stressed the role of the researcher in representing the case and capturing the complexity and contextual nature of the case.

Unlike Yin (2003), Stake does not have rigid parameters around data collection and analysis, but allows for flexibility in the research design to ensure the particularity, complexity, and context of the case. Similar to Yin (2003), Stake emphasized the data validation process as an important component of the research process that necessitated "discipline…protocols which do not depend on mere intuition and good intention to 'get it right'" (p. 107). This switch from an intuitive, non-determinant research process to one that is structured and rigid seems to be a mismatch from the epistemology Stake (1995) outlined earlier in his discussion of case study. As he discussed validation, he seemed to go in the direction of Yin (2003) in wanting the case study to be generalizable rather than the transferability that is usually desired in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009; Yazan, 2015).

Merriam's case study methodology. Merriam (2009) identified six methodologies – case study, critical, narrative, phenomenology, ethnography, and grounded theory – as part of *basic qualitative study* which seeks to explore "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The overall purpose is to *understand* [emphasis in original] how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (p. 23). While she provides an overview of other methodologies collectively in one

chapter, Merriam dedicated an entire chapter to case study methodology. She focused on qualitative case study, which she defined as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). She used Yin (2003) and Stake's (1995) definitions to highlight the nuance of case study being both a study of the unit of analysis (the case itself) and the research process. Merriam emphasized the bounding of the case as

> how finite the data collection would be…whether there is a limit to the number of people involved who could be interviewed or a finite time for observations. If there is no end, actually or theoretically, to the number of people who could be interviewed or to observations that could be conducted, then the phenomenon is not bounded enough to qualify as a case (p. 42).

Merriam (2009) encouraged identifying the unit of analysis and using the above test to determine the finiteness of that unit. Further, she delineated case study from other methodologies for its "special features" (p. 43) of particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic.

When discussing epistemology, Merriam (2009) discussed "epistemological perspectives" (p. 11) similar to the research paradigms discussed earlier: positivist/post positivist, interpretivist/constructivist, critical, and postmodern/post structural. While she situates that qualitative case study as usually within the interpretive/constructivist perspectives, she encouraged the exploration of a researcher's perspective:

> Getting started on a research project begins with examining your own orientation to basic tenets about the nature of reality, the purpose of doing research and the type of knowledge to be produced through your efforts (p. 13).

Merriam (2009) discussed various qualitative data analysis and validation techniques, but offered them "with the awareness that detailed instructions in analyzing and reporting qualitative

research, though helpful, are merely guidelines in need of interpretation and application by the single most important component in qualitative research – the investigator" (p. 167). Analysis and validation of the data is important for trustworthiness of the research, but Merriam stressed the importance of the flexible nature of research.

While each of these approaches to case study methodology has strengths and limitations, I used Merriam's (2009/2014) conceptualization of case study research to guide this study for several reasons. Primarily, Merriam's approach maintained the interpretive/constructivist paradigm throughout her description of the study. Merriam's work in adult education is also important to note as it aligns with the research area and the choice of qualitative research for this study. Using Merriam (2014) as a guide, I will discuss the methods of data collection for this case study.

Methods

As Merriam (2009) articulated, case studies are descriptions and analysis of bounded systems. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore how the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs conceptualized and enacted student affairs practices at Ashesi University. The bounded system is the OSCA staff at Ashesi University, which has a finite number of individuals with which I engaged in interviews and observations. The first two research questions focus specifically on the OSCA staff's perspectives and actualization of practice. The third question -- How do other university constituents (faculty, non-OSCA staff, students, and alumni) perceive OSCA as well as student and community affairs at Ashesi University? – helped in triangulating the OSCA staff conceptualizations.

Participant, recruitment, and site selection. I used purposive recruitment in this study to select participants. Purposive recruitment is used when "the investigator wants to discover,

understand, and gain insight…from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). I provided each participant with a consent form (Appendix A) which will inform them of the study purpose and research procedures. Each participant had the option to use their real name or use a pseudonym of, first, their choosing and then my choosing if they could not think of a pseudonym to use. Recruitment of OSCA participants was in two phases. First, I sent an email to the dean of students explaining the (a) purpose of the study, (b) consent form, (c) information about participating in the study, and (e) the timeline for the study for her to send to the OSCA staff (Appendix C). Following the email, I visited each OSCA staff member's offices and invited them to be part of the study. I recruited all of the OSCA staff members (10 total), as well as four faculty members, six non-OSCA staff members, and seven alumni to participate in the study. In chapter 4, I discuss data from interviews and observations with these participants to understand the conceptualizations and enactment of student affairs practice by the OSCA staff. I recruited non-OSCA staff, faculty, students and alumni using the snowball method of sampling with OSCA staff asking them to suggest other university constituents that I should talk to (Merriam, 2009). In addition, as I met other university constituents I introduced myself, the project I was working on, and asked if they would be interested in having a conversation with me regarding their perceptions of OSCA staff as well as student and community affairs at Ashesi. I used data from these interviews to understand how other university constituents (outside of OSCA) perceive and describe the role of OSCA staff as well as the status of student and community affairs on campus. Table 1 documents participant names/pseudonyms, the participant type, and the data collected from each participant.

Table 1

Participant Name/Pseudonym, Participant Type, and Data Collected

Participant Name/Pseudonym	Participant Type	Data Collected
Ruth	OSCA Staff	Individual Interview; Observation
Salome	OSCA Staff	Individual Interview
Madiba	OSCA Staff	Individual Interview; Observation
Jude	OSCA Staff	Individual Interview; Observation
Abigail	OSCA Staff	Group Interview; Observation
Esi	OSCA Staff	Individual Interview; Observation
Sylvia	OSCA Staff	Individual Interview; Observation
George	OSCA Staff	Group Interview; Observation
Kabiru	OSCA Staff/Alumnus	Individual Interview; Observation
Michelle	OSCA Staff/Alumna	Group Interview; Observation
Vanessa	Faculty Intern/Alumna	Individual Interview
Charles	Faculty	Individual Interview
Sena	Faculty	Individual Interview
Rebekah	Faculty	Individual Interview
Rosemary	non-OSCA Staff	Individual Interview
Theresa	non-OSCA Staff	Individual Interview
Aba	non-OSCA Staff	Individual Interview
Benardine	non-OSCA Staff	Individual Interview
Ebenezer	non-OSCA Staff/Alumnus	Individual Interview
Michael	non-OSCA Staff/Alumnus	Individual Interview
Andrew	Alumnus	Group Interview
Richard	Alumnus	Group Interview

As previously discussed, I selected Ashesi for the site of this research due to the uniqueness of the campus and preliminary research prior to the study abroad trip in December 2015. I received approval from the Institutional Review Boards of the University of Georgia and Ashesi University.

Data collection. Qualitative case study research is conducted using some combination of three collection methods: observations, interviews, and/or document review (Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yazan, 2015). I travelled to Ghana in October 2016 and collected data through the end of November 2016. During this time, I engaged in interviews and observations with the OSCA staff as they were the main focus of the study. For the faculty, non-OSCA administrators, students, and alumni, I engaged in individual or focus group interviews

depending on availability and willingness of the participants. I gathered documents (Ashesi announcements emails, news articles, OSCA-related work documents) that further informed the study.

Interviews. Interviews are one of the primary forms of data collection in qualitative traditions. According to deMarrais (2004), this method is "used when researchers want to gain in-depth knowledge from participants about particular phenomena, experiences, or sets of experiences" (p. 52). Seidman (2013) adds that "at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). Interviews are useful tools when soliciting information from participants that cannot be observed and for historical events (Merriam, 2009). Researchers use guides or protocols to organize and engage participants in the interview process that are standardized/structured, semi-structured, or unstructured/informal. (deMarrais, 2004; Merriam, 2009; Roulston, 2010; Seidman, 2013). Interviews can either be research-participant or in focus group/group interview format (Merriam, 2009; Liamputtong, 2010).

I facilitated one 60-minute interview with OSCA staff participants. During the interview, I gathered information about their personal and career background, their specific job responsibilities, and their perspective on student and community affairs. At the end of the interview, we discussed opportunities for the observation portion of the study. In my interviews with other university constituents, I conducted 17 individual interviews and 2 group interviews that lasted 30-75minutes. The two group interviews I facilitated was at the request of the participants due to their scheduled availability. During this interview, I gathered information about the background of the participants and their affiliation to Ashesi, the nature and duration of their interactions with the OSCA staff, and their perceptions of the role of OSCA staff at Ashesi

University. I conducted all interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix D). I audio-recorded each interview with the consent of the participants. For data analysis, I hired a Ghanaian transcriber to transcribe each interview.

Observations. In addition to interviews, observations are another method that undergirds qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). When using observations as a method, researchers can understand the phenomenon in a naturally occurring setting and can have a "firsthand encounter" (Merriam, 2009, p. 117) with the phenomenon. For this study, I used observations to understand the work of OSCA staff as student affairs practice in the naturally occurring setting at Ashesi University. During my interview with OSCA staff as discussed above, I discussed opportunities to observe the OSCA staff as an example of student affairs practice at Ashesi University. During the observations, I observed the OSCA staff participants' interactions with students and how their role matches to their descriptions in the initial interview. During each observation, I took notes or *jottings* about the sequence of events, quotes from participants, and a schematic of the observation location (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). I organized my jottings into field notes by inserting the information on the observation protocol, making notes for follow-up questions about unknown information discussed or presented during the observation, and adding my perceptions of the occurrences during the observation (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Through a process of journaling and reviewing the field notes, I created "a sustained narrative that documents 'what happened' from the beginning to the end of the activity or event" paying attention to describing the settings and the occurrences from the observations (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p.). This process ensured that I captured my observations as close to the occurrence as possible (Merriam, 2009). I completed a total of nine observations of OSCA staff using the observation protocol.

Document and artifact review. Documents are helpful tools for prompting interviews and will provide a non-intrusive, secondary perspective that is not created, like interviews and observations, specifically for the research questions at hand (Merriam, 2009; Prior, 2003). Broadening the term documents, Merriam included "written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study at hand" (p. 139), which also includes artifacts that "are 'things' or objects in the environment differentiated from documents that represent some form of communication…in existence prior to the research at hand" (pp.139-140). I gathered documents (Ashesi announcement emails, news articles, OSCA-related work documents) that guided the interview with participants and further informed the findings of this study.

Data analysis and validation. As the instrument of research, I am the source of data collection, analysis and validation. I view data analysis as a continuous process once data collection begins as this "simultaneous activity…leads to the refinement or reformation of questions" (Merriam, 2009, p. 165). Corbin & Strauss (2015) called this process *microanalysis* which is a coding process that helps to analyze each piece of datum to extract meaning and understand its connection to the research process. I analyzed the interview data using an inductive reading process. For the interviews, I read each interview based on the type of participant (OSCA staff or non-OSCA constituent) with the research questions in mind. I highlighted chunks of the participants' responses that I thought answered the research question. After reading and chunking all of the interviews, I pulled out the highlighted chunks in a separate document and read through each of the chunks. I grouped the chunks that represented similar patterns and journaled about what those similar patterns were within the groupings. Using journaling, I wrote memos that summed up the groupings, categorizing them as wisdom about student and community affairs at Ashesi University and imagined the participants as imparters of

that wisdom. Then, I considered what the central theme of each of the groupings were and wrote proverbs that represented that central themes of the research that I will discuss more in-depth in chapter 4.

I read each observation narrative with the observation guide and the groupings from the process of analyzing the data in mind. After reading each narrative, I selected two observations that aligned with the observation guide, theoretical framework, and the central findings for the research study. Finally, I incorporated documents throughout this document from Ashesi's website and those that I collected at Ashesi University to support the background and findings for this research study as a means of triangulating the data findings.

I engaged in several strategies to judge the authenticity of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). I used five criteria for authenticity: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity. Fairness refers to balancing the perspectives of all the participants and including these perspectives even if they are in conflict (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In order to be sure that I am being fair in representing the participants, I kept a researcher journal to engage in active self-reflection or reflexivity throughout the research experience (Watt, 2007). This was critical for me to constantly engage my researcher perspective as the instrument of data collection and analysis and as a cross-cultural researcher in Ghana (Liamputtong, 2010; Watt, 2007). As part of keeping the journal, I engaged in constructing memos of the data, especially during the data analysis (Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Watt, 2007). These "written records of analysis" (Simons, 2009, p. 106), provided a guide for the data analysis process that will be helpful for member checking and peer review. In addition to the journal, I kept an audit trail connected to the microanalysis process I described earlier that connects each datum used to formulate the findings so that the peer reviewers can understand

where the findings are drawn from (Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009). Using this trail, I triangulated the interviews, observations and documents collected during this study.

Ontological authenticity is when there is growth in how participants demonstrate an "improvement in the conscious experiencing of the world" (Lincoln, 1986, p. 6). Through the interviews, participants shared their conceptualizations of student affairs practice and their role at the institution. I engaged in member checking with the participants by sending them the interview transcripts and observation narratives from this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Merriam, 2009). In addition, during the workshop I facilitated with the staff, I shared preliminary results from the research study and gathered participants' thoughts about the results and incorporated their suggestions into the final themes and findings for the study. Similarly, educative authenticity criteria are about how the participants can understand points of views different from their own as it relates to the phenomenon of interest (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In addition to member checking the transcripts and observation narratives to provide feedback, I shared the preliminary findings of the study with the participants to gather their reactions to answering the research questions during a presentation-workshop I facilitated at Ashesi University at the conclusion of the data collection period. During the workshop, OSCA staff shared their perspectives related to the findings and offered suggestions on how the findings should be interpreted. I provide an example of this perspective at the beginning of chapter 4.

Building on fairness, ontological authenticity, and educative authenticity, catlytical authenticity refers to how the research findings create an impetus for collaborative action between the participants and the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). During the interviews with each participant, I inquired about workshop topical areas that I could facilitate for the OSCA staff at the end of the data collection period. Participants shared that they were interested in

promising practices and current theories of student affairs that were applicable to their work at Ashesi. I decided to focus the workshop on preliminary results from the research study, an overview of applicable theories in student affairs, and a workshop on assessment in student affairs practice. I decided on the workshop topic to be on assessment due to OSCA staff discussing their desire to learn more about how students perceive student and community affairs on campus and from their recent hire of a data analyst to manage and interpret student and alumni career-related data. Tactical authenticity refers to how the inquiry empowers the participants, especially in their practice. My goal with this research is that it is the beginning of a partnership between myself and Ashesi to build their skills as student affairs practitioners. As I discussed briefly above and will expound upon in chapter 4, I represented the findings of this study as proverbs that are the central themes for this study. In addition, I connect these proverbs to the Ashesi University logo.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed my researcher perspective, choice of methodology, specific methods of data collection, and data analysis and validation. I draw my researcher perspective from the constructivist paradigm and from the exploration of this perspective from my trips to Ghana in December 2015 and October 2016. In answering my research questions, I focused on the subjective perspectives of the participants (OSCA staff, non-OSCA administrators, faculty, students, and alumni) in interviews, observations, and documents review. I used a process of microanalysis and inductive analysis as the analytical method for this study. All my findings are bound within the case, which is OSCA staff at Ashesi University. To ensure trustworthiness of the findings, I used journaling/memoing, member checking, and audit trail as tools of data validation. In the following chapter, I present the findings of this qualitative case study.

CHAPTER 4

PROVERBS OF STUDENT AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

…Here at last, I looked back on my Dream;
I heard the Voice that loosed
The Long-looked dungeons of my soul
I sensed that Africa had come
Not up from Hell, but from the sum of Heaven's glory.
I lifted up mine eyes to Ghana
And swept the hills with high Hosanna;
Above the sun my sight took flight
Till from that pinnacle of light
I saw dropped down this earth of crimson, green and gold
Roaring with color, drums and song.
Happy with dreams and deeds worth more than doing
Around me velvet faces loomed
Burnt by the kiss of everlasting suns
Under great stars of midnight glory
Trees danced, and foliage sang;
The lilies hallelujah rang
Where robed with rule on Golden Stool
The gold-crowned Priests with duty done
Pour high libations to the sun
And danced to gods.
Red blood flowed rare 'neath close-clung hair
While subtle perfume filled the air
And whirls and whirls of tiny curls
Crowned heads.
(DuBois, 1963, p. 2) …

Two days before leaving Ghana, I facilitated a workshop for OSCA staff on promising practices in student affairs and higher education as well as preliminary findings from my research study. After discussing the background to my research, I shared quotes from OSCA staff regarding how they conceptualized and enacted student and community affairs at Ashesi. The last quote on the slide read: *It doesn't feel like work; this is purpose.* The quote came from my interview with the assistant dean of students, Madiba (a self-selected pseudonym), in our

discussion about the importance of encouraging students to get involved as part of his own success as an undergraduate student. Because of this belief, Madiba conceptualized his role as the assistant dean of students at Ashesi was to invest in students and provide them with the support they need to persist, graduate, and be a change agent in their communities.

"Madiba, is that yours at the end," the dean of students, Ruth, commented. The staff immediately all laughed and nodded their heads in agreement. "It's supposed to be confidential you all." I offered jokingly. "Right, right it's supposed to be confidential, I am sorry. Madiba has a way of phrasing things." Ruth continued. And she was exactly right; if you met Madiba and started a conversation on just about any topic with him, you would leave the conversation new language and a new perspective about the topic. Madiba's way of conceptualizing student and community affairs stuck with me as something I saw present in all of the OSCA staff. While the purpose emanated and manifested in different ways, OSCA staff's central purpose was to fulfill Ashesi's mission. Other university constituents also observed OSCA's role on campus as critical to translating the mission into programs and services for students. I shared this with OSCA staff before moving ahead with the presentation: their purpose-driven, mission-centered practice was inspiring and served as the central findings of this research study.

In this chapter, I share the findings of this research study represented as proverbs of student and community affairs practice. As discussed in previous chapters, three research questions guided this study: a) How do the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs conceptualize student and community affairs? (b)What strategies do the staff members of the Office of Student and Community Affairs employ to enact student and community affairs? And (c) How do other university constituents (faculty, students, administrators, and alumni) perceive student and community affairs at Ashesi University? Using

the analyzed data from interviews, observations, and documents, I present the central themes that answer each of these research questions as proverbs corresponding to the Ashesi logo. I begin the chapter with an overview of the findings of the study and findings representations. Then, I review each finding in sections with the associated proverb and section of the Ashesi University logo. In these sections, I discuss the proverb, its connection to the logo, how the logo connects to Ghanaian Adinkra symbols, and support the findings with quotes from participant interviews, observation narratives, and documents from the Ashesi website and collected during my time at the institution. I conclude the chapter with arranging the proverbs and the logo as a visual representation of the findings of this case study.

Overview of Findings

Findings for questions #1 and #2 emanate from the analysis of interviews and observations with OSCA staff as well as an analysis of documents provided by staff members directly or received from the Ashesi University website. Findings for question #3 emanate from interviews with non-OSCA staff, students, faculty, and alumni of Ashesi University. I divide this chapter into three parts that correspond to each of the findings. I present each finding as a central theme expressed in the form of a proverb that corresponds to a portion of the Ashesi logo (ABIG, 2015). Proverbs are expressions, philosophies, or saying created and shared to share wisdom and information (Okrah, 2003; Kquofi, Amate, & Tabi-Agyei, 2013). Proverbs expressed through an oral, written, or visual media serves as a means of cultural transmission (Okrah, 2003). I chose to express the central themes of the study using the symbol-proverb form to honor the participants in this study and their wisdom shared throughout this study. As such, I imagine their responses to my questions, my observations of their actions, and the documents from Ashesi's website and those given to me by the staff as modes of cultural transmission. Each of the proverbs are drawn

from the Ashesi University logo and expands on the significance of the context of the university in Ghana as part of this research. The three proverbs that represent the central findings of this research study are: (a) always carry a covering, the stool must not touch the ground; (b) out of one seed comes many fruit; and (c) we must always be aware of the roof.

Overview of Findings Representation

The etymology of the word *adinkra* is related to the use of the symbols in Ghanaian culture. According to Willis (1998):

> The word *adinkra* comprises three parts. The word *di* means 'to make use of' or 'to employ.' *Nkra* means 'message' and the *a* is the Akan prefix of an abstract noun. Together *di* and *nkra* mean 'to part, be separated, to leave one another, or to say good-bye.' In the word *adinkra, nkra* means the intelligence or message that each individual soul takes with [them] from God on departing from earth (Kra is the Twi word for 'the soul.') *Thus adinkra implies a message a soul takes along when leaving the earth, hence the expression 'saying goodbye to one another when parting'* (p. 28).

Adinkra symbols "reflect traditional mores and specific communal values, philosophical concepts, codes of conduct, and the social standards of the Akan people" (Willis, 1998, p.1). In Ghanaian culture, grieving families stamp Adinkra symbols on cloth for funeral proceedings to send messages about and to deceased loved ones (Willis, 1998). Many Adinkra symbols have an associated proverb or saying that helps relay information. For example Figure 2 presents the Adinkra symbol sankofa means "go back and fetch it" (Willis, 1998, p. 188). The symbol is a reminder to acknowledge the role of history in one's present decisions In addition to funeral activities, Adinkra symbols are now also used as motif for buildings, furniture, and business logos.

Figure 2. Adinkra symbol: Sankofa bird. The phrase associated with this Adinkra symbol is “go back and fetch it” (Willis, 1998, p. 188). Reprinted with permission* from adinkra.org.

Ashesi University incorporates the Adinkra symbol tradition in its logo attributing the symbols (Figure 3). According to the Ashesi Branding and Identity Guide (ABIG, 2015):

> The Ashesi logo, a hand drawn symbol, borrows from the tradition of "Adinkra design," used by the Akan people of Ghana to embody their knowledge, their moral and ethical beliefs, and their history. Ashesi's logo is a visual representation of Ashesi's mission. The lower part is in the shape of a stool whose support structure consists of three pillars. These correspond to Ashesi's core values of scholarship, leadership and citizenship. Stools hold significant cultural meaning for the Akan people of Ghana. The circle above the stool depicts a morning sun and symbolizes a new beginning. It is also the center of an eye, which symbolizes intellectual exploration and discovery. At a distance, the mark as a whole resembles a person standing under a roof, reflecting Ashesi's focus on the people in and around its community: students, teachers, parents and members of the broader society (p. 2).

Ashesi’s logo honors the Ghanaian context in which Ashesi was founded and is a “visual representation of the mission of Ashesi” (ABIG, p. 2). One of the central themes of this research is that OSCA staff conceptualize and enact student affairs practice through the lens of fulfilling Ashesi’s mission. Throughout this chapter, I highlight various sections of the logo as outlined in the Ashesi Branding and Identity Guide to represent the central themes of this study.

Corresponding to these sections of the logo, I have created a proverb to represent the central themes that answer each of the research questions. In each of the next three sections, I present the portion of the logo, the corresponding proverb, and data from interviews, observations, and documents to support these findings. Figure 3 depicts Ashesi's logo that I align with the proverbs for the study.

Proverb 1: "Always take a covering, the stool must not touch the ground."

The stool holds significant meaning in Ghanaian culture. According to Willis (1998) retelling of oral accounts of the stool's presence in Ghanaian culture:

> In 1697, Osei Tutu (reigning from 1697-1731) convened an assembly of people to spread a message that Okomfo Anokye [priest] had told him what Nyame, the supreme god of the Akans, had revealed to him. At that meeting it is said that Okomfo Anokye brought down from the sky a wooden stool, partly covered with gold, to rest on Osei Tutu's knees. This Golden Stool (sika dwa) was believed by the Asante to embody the soul of the nation. This event was seen as a sign of divine election and served to unify the people and forge the Asante Confederation. The Golden Stool is said to have contained the collective soul and spirit of the entire Asante people and to its people symbolized their unity and continued prosperity (pp. 15-16).

The stool is an important symbol for preserving culture and leadership reverence. Leaders who occupy the stool are thought to protect the soul of the people. As such, protocols must be met regarding its use. Within this tradition, the stool must not have direct contact with the ground without barrier, and, when not in use, is stored in a special location called the stool house (Parrinder, 1956).

Figure 3. Ashesi University logo, which I align with the proverbs as the findings for this study. The stool in the bottom portion of the logo aligns with the first proverb of the study. The circle above the stool aligns with the second proverb of the study. The roof above the circle aligns with the third proverb of the study. This logo is reprinted with the permission of Ashesi University.

Ashesi uses the stool as part of its logo in part because of the significance of the stool to Ghanaian culture and the significance of its own mission at the university: "The lower part is in the shape of a stool whose support structure consists of three pillars. These correspond to Ashesi's core values of scholarship, leadership and citizenship" (ABIG, 2015, p. 2).

In the proverb, *Always take a covering, the stool must not touch the ground,* I represent OSCA staff's conceptualization of student and community affairs as the covering that protects the sacredness of the mission. In addition to representing the core values of the institution, I also view the stool as an extension of the mission of the university. The mission of the Ashesi is

> to educate a new generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders in Africa; to cultivate within our students the critical thinking skills, concern for others and courage it will take to transform a continent (ABIG, 2015, p. 9).

Ashesi's curriculum, career services, student coaching and advising, and involvement opportunities emanate from this bold mission to "transform a continent" (ABIG, 2015, p. 9).

Throughout the data collection phase, the mission repeatedly became how the OSCA staff conceptualized the purpose of student and community affairs at Ashesi. They borrowed words and phrases from the mission statement as well as concepts from the institutional values to frame how they interpreted their roles on campus. For many of the OSCA staff, the focus on the mission of the institution as a means of conceptualizing student and community affairs began as part of their journey to Ashesi. In the following sections, I use quotes from OSCA staff interviews to discuss the central theme of supporting the institutional mission or *providing a covering for the stool* as how OSCA staff conceptualize student and community affairs at Ashesi University. I begin with OSCA staff's journeys to Ashesi as how they were initially attracted to the mission and then discuss how they conceptualize student and community affairs specifically using the mission statement, institutional values, or the enacted mission as part of their conceptualization.

"It was Ashesi or Nothing."

As Salome reflected on her nearly eight years at Ashesi, she talked about her journey to the institution after completing her undergraduate and graduate degrees in the United States. Upon returning home to Ghana, she wanted to work in college student counseling and advising, similar to what she had done in the United States. In her research, she came became fascinated with Ashesi University. She remarked, "I couldn't see myself working anywhere else…when I was coming home, it was Ashesi or nothing." Ashesi's mission and vision attracted Salome and her desire to work with college students. For many of the OSCA staff, the mission of Ashesi attracted them to the campus as a workplace. Throughout the interviews, many of the staff discussed their journey to Ashesi and as the foundation to their work on campus. While their

educational and professional pathways varied, all of the OSCA staff expressed a passion for youth development and they tied Ashesi's mission to this passion.

Esi, the assistant director of career services, also discussed completing her graduate degree in Ghana and wanting to work at Ashesi. While waiting on positions to become available at Ashesi, Esi worked at two other institutions in career counseling and teaching. Specifically, she was attracted to Ashesi's mission from her own experiences of needed career guidance, a practice that Ashesi stressed as part of the student experience. Esi shared:

> …so, one thing that really drew me to Ashesi was their vision and their mission and what it was that they sought to do. Growing up, leaving school, I hardly had any form of guidance – career development education or counseling – nothing of the sort. So leaving school, and knowing that I could pretty much well excel in anything I decided to do, it made it so confusing for me – with no one to guide you and that kind of thing. So I felt like this is something that is very important for us as a nation to actually work on – to help our youth to find their way.

Ashesi's mission "really drew" Esi to want to work at the institution, specifically continuing her work in career counseling for students. In reflecting on her own experiences as a student, Esi tied Ashesi's mission to a national development strategy focused on providing career guidance for Ghanaian youth. Specifically, Esi and other OSCA staff focus on youth development was specifically within the context of higher education. They wanted to work at a place that focused on the student as part of the educational mission. Further, the context of Ghana served as ideal for this development because of its history on the continent.

Jude, coordinator for summer programs and community affairs, discussed the context of Ghana and higher education as part of the development of the country. It was not only the

mission that attracted Jude to Ashesi, but the vision of the institution as a world-class institution that also intrigued him. Prior to Ashesi, Jude started a non-profit organization to promote leadership development for youth and worked for an organization that promoted democracy in Ghana. Jude's path to Ashesi was evident in his interest in working at the institution:

> …the truth is, I had been looking for an opportunity to somehow work with Ashesi for about four, five years. My principal interest in Ashesi was to find out how people build a world class institution in our context. So Ghana is a difficult place to do these such things and Ashesi obviously from what I had heard and what I had read, was doing something comparable to anything anywhere else. And I was curious about how they were doing it, so that was my principal interest. So when I saw the opportunity to take up the job with Summer and Community Engagement Programs, I applied for it.

Jude's interest in Ashesi as a workplace was due to his curiosity with the uniqueness of the institution in becoming world-class and how it was doing so in the "difficult" context of Ghana. This problem-solving orientation of the university attracted Jude and he wanted to be part of learning as Ashesi developed into a world-class institution. In each of these examples, the OSCA staff embraced Ashesi's mission as how they began their journey to working on the campus. OSCA staff's interest in Ashesi began with an attraction to the mission of the institution, which indicates the mission as central to how they conceptualize their role to ensure the sacredness of the mission. In the next section, I discuss further how OSCA staff conceptualize student and community affairs as a covering to hold sacred the mission (stool) of Ashesi University.

Mission-fulfillers

> The mission statement of Ashesi is to
>
> to educate a new generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders in Africa; to cultivate

> within our students the critical thinking skills, concern for others and courage it will take to transform a continent (ABIG, 2015, p. 9).

The mission centers on outcomes for students – ethics, entrepreneurship, leadership, critical thinking, empathy, and courage – that the institution instills for students to be able to "transform a continent" (ABIG, 2015, p. 9). This mission, especially, the end formed the crux of how OSCA staff conceptualized student and community affairs at Ashesi. As discussed previously, the mission is what was part of how OSCA staff were attracted to the institution. As part of their first attraction to the campus, they conceptualized their roles in terms of ensuring the mission would be fulfilled. Michelle, coordinator for career services, conceptualized student and community affairs as a "cycle…because we are all mates. It's all in a community, family. We're going in the same direction with the same goal, same mission." Similarly, Abigail, assistant director for career services, shared:

> we all kind of understand the vision and the mission and it makes it easier, you know…to give 120% of yourself to the work that you're doing, you know…and not just think about the material benefits that you're getting out of it.

Michelle and Abigail's views on their roles on campus was tied to the shared aims of fulfilling the mission of Ashesi. From Michelle's view, this role as mission-fulfillers created a sense of community and family within the work of student and community affairs at Ashesi. For Abigail, being mission-fulfillers translated into an intrinsic value to her work. In each of my conversations with OSCA staff, there was a reference to some portion of the mission. In particular, OSCA staff preoccupied their conceptualizations of student and community affairs with helping students understand their role in transforming the continent of Africa

Kabiru, project coordinator for community engagement, knew first-hand about how Ashesi's mission was central to student and community affairs as an alumnus of Ashesi. After graduating from Ashesi in 2014, Kabiru completed his one-year compulsory Ghanaian national service at Ashesi and remained on as project coordinator to help build community engagement at Ashesi. What attracted to and kept Kabiru at Ashesi was his imagining the entire university community as working toward changing the African continent. Kabiru described how he viewed the possibilities for his work at Ashesi:

> I don't know anywhere on the continent where I would go to, that I'd meet 30 different African nationals, or meet people from you know, people who are brought together by a common vision of wanting to do something different. It's very much in Ashesi that I get that kind of a vibe, and it's a place that I think it provides me an opportunity to actually – it provides the framework for me to really achieve what I want to achieve in terms of: research base, in terms of innovation base, in terms of just pioneering a new vision for Africa. I think that could be done here, and it is being done… So really, being here, the opportunity it really presents, is really being able to connect with people who are eager to change the world like you are.

As an alumnus, Kabiru participated in many of the experiences connected to the mission statement as a student at Ashesi. In his role as project coordinator, he was in charge of creating the experiences for students. As he discussed how he conceptualized his role at Ashesi, he discussed how the people of the institution "who are brought together by a common vision of wanting to do something different." He sees Ashesi as a place "to connect with people who are eager to change the world like you are." I interpreted this as tied to Ashesi's mission to "transform the continent" (ABIG, 2015, p. 9).

OSCA staff discussed how they viewed their role within student and community affairs helped students to understand how they could be part of the continent's transformation. For example, Jude discussed how his role was tied to the transformation of the continent role inclusive of cultivating "a concern for others" (ABIG, 2015, p. 9) through community engagement programs. Jude believed in the Ashesi mission "without an iota of reservation" and saw this mission as essential for improving how students perceived Ghanaian-African society:

> I think what matters is, people who are sufficiently passionate about society to want to make a difference. And I think these community engagement initiatives that students do, allow them to experience the joy of making a difference in society. And so, for me, whenever we're having to do this, even if the students' project doesn't succeed, I'm happy that they noticed a problem, defined it, are ready to design an intervention and go out there and try and see if that intervention would make that difference. And whether that works or not, that experience that they carry with them, hopefully, makes them a more empathetic, compassionate, visionary leader in 15, 20 years' time. Because I think if that is taken away, then Ashesi yeah, is no different from any other I think if we say we want to see a new Africa and that's the vision, then, central to it is our students' attitude to society. And when they come in, no matter what I'm doing, I'll leave that and attend to the student to make sure they know that what they're doing is valuable.

Jude shared his perspective on the importance of passion that students should have for society. This passion, he felt, could be translated to the "community engagement initiatives" as ways for students to develop this passion. This means that the projects become opportunities for students to learn about how they can continuously improve their "attitude to society." Central to Jude's conceptualization of his role in community engagement within student and community affairs

was fulfilling Ashesi's mission. He valued the mission and interpreted his work as critical to holding the mission sacred by communicating his focus on supporting the students through their process of learning their role in society.

In addition to valuing the focus of the mission "to cultivate…a concern for others" and "transform the continent," (ABIG, p. 2) some OSCA staff also focused on students' leadership development experiences. Madiba saw many opportunities for creating opportunities beyond the 4-year activity plan for students to develop leadership skills. Madiba's focused on educating and developing students as leaders at Ashesi:

> Ashesi talks a lot about leadership and our students being transformative leaders who go out there and make a difference in Africa. I believe in that I really believe in that because that's what we need in our country and on our continent now. I keep telling students that leadership is not something we learn in the classroom. You need to immerse yourself in experiences. That allows you to connect with other people. That allows you to see different realities they are not exposed to.

Madiba spoke directly to Ashesi's focus on "transformative leaders" and the push to "make a difference in Africa." He expands on this focus in the mission by helping students to engage in leadership outside of the classroom and encouraging them to have experiences that connects them to people and "see different realities." For Madiba, he encourages students in this way because of his commitment to the mission of Ashesi through leadership and, like Jude, he focuses on cultivating empathy.

Staff used many words to describe how they conceptualized student and community affairs at Ashesi: seed, cycle, tree, enabler, phoenix, pacesetter, excellence, potter, connection. In each of these conceptualizations, they referenced a connection to Ashesi's mission and the

students. OSCA staff saw themselves as responsible for fulfilling the mission of Ashesi and ensuring that the mission always remains at the focal point of their work. Similar to how the covering preserves the sacredness of the stool, OSCA staff uses student and community affairs to uphold the mission of Ashesi University. The mission represents the shared aim for student and community affairs at Ashesi and influences how they, as I will discuss in the next section, enact their practice. So, in response to the first research question of this study – how do the staff members of OSCA conceptualize student and community affairs at Ashesi University? – I answer with the proverb: *Always take a covering, the stool must not touch the ground.* They work to esteem the mission acting as the ground covering through this conceptualization. These conceptualizations helped to frame how OSCA staff enacted student affairs practice at Ashesi University.

Proverb 2: "Out of one seed comes many fruit."

According to Ruth, the dean of students, she and another staff member created a 4-year activity plan as an outline for enacting student and community affairs at Ashesi (Kwakwa & Adjei, 2015). This plan included students' academic curriculum, student affairs activities, and career development trainings. This plan was separated out to include specific activities for all students as well as special populations (MasterCard Scholars and International students). The OSCA staff enacted the activity plan in the form of one-on-one mentoring sessions with all first year students, training sessions for life skills and career development, and institution-wide sessions, like orientation for students. In addition, OSCA staff augment the activity plan where needed to fill specific needs for students like the MasterCard scholars or international students. Each of these activities guide OSCA staff as they plan programs and envision how they can best impact students, which Ruth discussed in her interview:

> So we basically mapped out what all students at all times should be doing at any given year…What do we need to do to support students while they are growing? What do we need to do to support students who are transitioning out of university? We're making it up! We're learning this as we're going…So we did this thing just to kind of say this is what all students would go through in their first year and we made up all of this. We said what is a student going through in their first year? Obviously, we're reading heavily as we're piecing this together but we're saying what is a student going through in their first year? Then on top of that what is a MasterCard scholar get in addition to what all other students get? So, we invented this thing and started using it to guide our work and you know just make it up.

By considering what students need throughout their four years at Ashesi and how those activities overlap with their academic and career development needs, Kwakwa and Adjei (2015) enacted their vision for student success at Ashesi University. As Ruth discussed creating the activity plan, she continuously referred to asking questions about student success and how she and her colleague had to work without an established foundation. Her "piecing this together" and "making it up" meant that each year was also an opportunity for the staff to discover how their activity plan as part of fulfilling the mission of the university. Here, OSCA staff represent the entrepreneurial spirit and model it for students.

Using the 4-year activity plan as a guide, OSCA staff employed two primary strategies for enacting student and community affairs at Ashesi: building relationships with the university and external community and building student skillset in leadership, entrepreneurship, ethics, and career development. In the second proverb – *Out of one seed comes many fruit* – represents how OSCA staff employ these strategies or seeds to produce outcomes outlined in the mission

statement or fruit within students. I draw this language from how Madiba used a seed metaphor to discuss his role at Ashesi:

> I would choose a seed because out of one seed you can get many fruits. When the seed is planted you need water, you need sunshine, you need good soil to make that seed grow. Water is something you have no control. Sunshine you don't have control over right? So I keep telling students that we'll figure out the things we have no control and then we do our best to make sure we fix it. Other things we don't have control over we just put it there…The reason I choose that is every investment I'm making to students, I feel like they're the seed I'm planting. Every day I step on campus here I feel like I'm planting a seed here at Ashesi…When I leave I hope that all the seeds that I planted someone somewhere feels it's worth watering.

Madiba's use of a seed resonated with much of what I observed from the OSCA staff at Ashesi. They used the mission as the foundation to their work and incorporated the strategies previously discuss to enact the mission. The unwavering focus on the mission influenced how they interacted with students in orientation and progression at the university. As a planter and cultivator of seeds within students, Madiba imagined that he was making an investment in not only the students but in the future of the continent. Critical to this work was building relationships with students and helping them to understand how they can create spheres of influence. In the Ashesi logo, "the circle above the stool depicts a morning sun and symbolizes a new beginning. It is also the center of an eye, which symbolizes intellectual exploration and discovery" (p. 2). In addition, I imagine the circle as the seed Madiba discussed above that are the strategies OSCA staff employ to produce the outcomes (fruit) in Ashesi students.

Seeds of Relationships

I first met Jude by email when I was looking for housing near Ashesi during my time in Ghana. He connected me to the hostel that Ashesi used for visitors to the campus. The second time I met Jude was on my first day back on the campus in Fall 2016; he joined Ruth and Madiba in a meeting with me to discuss the data collection process. Throughout my time at Ashesi, I had many conversations with Jude in addition to our interview about Ghana, Ashesi, student and community affairs, and global affairs. During my interview with Jude, he shared his perspective on how he viewed his role in community engagement for Ashesi:

> I think what matters is, people who are sufficiently passionate about society to want to make a difference. And I think these community engagement initiatives that students do, allow them to experience the joy of making a difference in society. And so for me, whenever we're having to do this, even if the students' project doesn't succeed, I'm happy that they noticed a problem, defined it, are ready to design an intervention and go out there and try and see if that intervention would make that difference. And whether that works or not, that experience that they carry with them, hopefully, makes them a more empathetic, compassionate, visionary leader in 15, 20 years' time. Because I think if that is taken away, then Ashesi is no different from any other. I think if we say we want to see a new Africa and that's the vision, then, central to it is our s students' attitude to society. And when they come in, no matter what I'm doing, I'll leave that and attend to the student to make sure they know that what they're doing is valuable.

Jude saw that the relationships he formed with students to process their learning process with community engagement programs as central to how he ensured that students were "more empathetic, compassionate, [and] visionary leader[s]." The ability to facilitate empathy in

students is directly related to the mission of the university and sets Ashesi apart from other institutions of higher education. By building relationships with students, Jude demonstrated how he is contributing to the mission of the university and how students see the context that they are attempting to transform. I got to see this first hand in my observation of Jude's mentorship session with first-year students.

Jude's mentoring session. "Where is everyone?" Jude looked around his office at the six students who were present for the mentoring session. The Mentoring Program was created by OSCA staff for two major reasons. The first was to facilitate first year students' "adjust quickly to Ashesi culture" (Ashesi Mentoring Program Guide, n.d., p. 2). OSCA staff envisioned the program would be a better tool for orientation to the expectations and responsibilities of being an Ashesi student. The second reason was due to the increasing number of first year students matriculating into Ashesi. This year's first year class grew by 180 students, which could impact the small community feel of the campus. Each mentorship group is composed of no more than 10 first-year students and is "facilitated by a staff and/or faculty member with a peer mentor for the freshman class" (p. 2). Over the 10-week semester, students engage with each other in a series of topics outlined in the Ashesi Mentoring Program Guide (n.d.). Facilitators and students use the guide as a template, but have the opportunity to enhance the guide as needed with activities and material. One of the major challenges of the program cited by faculty and staff was finding a common meeting time for everyone in the group.

Jude's inquiry stemmed from the issue of finding a time. In our interview, Jude commented on the difficulty in finding a common meeting time for the mentorship group. Today, five students were missing, including the peer mentor, as Jude began the session. Jude had selected the day and time because of everyone's availability. As I would later learn, Jude also

had to figure out the location issue having finalized the session just the day prior, which he solved quickly by deciding to have the session in his office. Space also presented difficulties at Ashesi. So with the scheduling issue and space issue present, many mentors held the mentoring sessions in their offices. So, for today's session, the session was held in Jude's office. As students arrived, he asked them to gather chairs from the numerous gathering space alcoves around Radichel Hall, a mixed-use building which held classrooms and faculty-staff offices. Just outside of the hall was the Archer Courtyard, which coincidentally had an event with music taking place, which could be heard in Jude's office. Still with these issues, Jude handled them as they arose and in the tradition of OSCA staff: identify the problem and come up with a solution so that the program can continue.

No one had answered Jude's question about the whereabouts of their fellow students. The students' weary look was a familiar look I had seen from my own experiences working with college students as they attempted to learn how to balance multiple commitments. This did not deter Jude who persisted, "Has anyone heard from [student name]? I know that [student name] will not be here because he has a meeting, but I have not heard from anyone else." In many of the interviews with OSCA staff, they discussed how it took a few years for students to become comfortable speaking out in public, even when prompted to do so directly as Jude was doing. The silence, according to the staff, was not a form of disrespect, but usually students have to get comfortable being asked their opinions and thoughts. I saw this silence in situations where most of the audience consisted of first year students; this silence was almost non-existent in my observations with upper years.

Jude changed gears again, "Okay let's just begin. So, the last time we met, we talked about differences between high school and college. Does anyone have any questions about that

session?" When met with the silence again, Jude pointed to a student in the back of the room and asked, "How is your problem you discussed the other time we met?" The student points at himself in a motion that silently asked, "Who me?" After Jude nodded the student shrugged his shoulders and responded, "It's getting better," without any addition explanation. "Oh it is getting better," Jude continued, "good. What about you, is it getting better?" Jude asked as he pointed to another student sitting near the door. She nodded her head and immediately looked down, in the hopes, I think, of him not continuing the line of questioning. As if he had an epiphany, Jude looked in my direction with a nod and introduced me, "Oh everyone, this is Jillian. She is doing some research here on OSCA and is observing me today." I say hello and get a few smiles of greeting from the students. Three students walked into the room and sit in the rudimentary rows created when we gathered chairs. Jude gave them a nod and holds up the mentoring guide, "Does everyone have their guide from last time?" Some of the students reached into their bags and pull out the guide while a couple of students shook their heads. Jude finds two guides on his desk and passes them back to the students. "You all can share," he said as he passed them out.

He asked for a student volunteer to read the first section of the guide for today's session. After a couple of moments of silence, one of the students sitting nearest to Jude began to read:

> We are all different and to prescribe how to study and prepare for examinations may seem foolhardy. But the truth is that with few exemptions most people would benefit from learning from the experience of the older generation with regard to their successes and their failures. The alternative is to repeat the mistakes of yesteryears instead of standing on the shoulders of the older generation to see further (APMG, n.d., p. 5).

The student paused and looked up at Jude expectantly. This week's session was "Making the most out of academics." The mentorship guide featured various strategies for students to

engage responsibly in their academic process. Jude nodded toward the student to continue reading. After each of the section, Jude would pause and inquire about students' experience with the strategy and if it worked for them. Usually, his questions were met with silence or nods of agreement. When he would single out a student to answer, he would get one-word responses or a general agreement with the strategy.

"What is wrong? Everyone has low energy," Jude said after the student read through the section. Here the students immediately responded:

"We are tired because there is so much work to do."

"I don't have time to even eat because of the amount of things I have going on."

"Why do professors assign so much work?"

"They are making sure you are learning what you need," Jude responded. The silence returned and Jude asked the reader to continue reading. "These are just suggestions to help you be a good student here." He pointed to a student in the back of the classroom, "Weren't you talking about how you needed help with calculus in the last session? How are you handling that?"

"Well, I asked some second and third years to help and I am doing okay now," the student responded.

"Good. If you could help yourself from six weeks ago, what would you all do differently," Jude inquired breaking from the guide script to understand how the students were adapting to the experience. At first, there was the familiar silence, but immediately students began to answer this question.

"Sleep less and learn more when thing get difficult. So instead of just taking a nap, push through it."

"Immediately after class review."

"Read before going to class." Everyone in the room burst out in laughter, including Jude. After the laughter subsided, another student shared, “If I'm struggling with something, it is something I didn’t know.”

Jude advised, "Be happy you're being exposed to new things. When you are having to engage with things that are tough, you get out of your comfort zone. Do you think you are the same person?” Jude asked. Some of the students shake their heads, while others say “No.”

"I agree with you! You even smile differently,” Jude offered with a smile. This produced laughter again from the students. Jude continued:

> University is easier that secondary school. Every place has its own type of stress. When I was in school, my roommate Gideon asked me why I thought university is easier because he was always stressed. I told him that he was stressed because he was an engineering major! [laughter] It is going to get tougher - embrace it! I had a friend who was very smart and gifted. He was brilliant. He goes to IBM to work and felt like everything was strange. My friend said it took him three years to learn IBM. It's tough but you are developing. Ashesi was so different from other places I have worked; I had a hard time learning too. It is part of the discipline; far better to be in this discomfort now and have a life of ease. [student name] has a little less swagger. I think he's been humbled.

Although they still look weary, as Jude shared the stories from his own experiences, students leaned forward and listened intently to his perspective. The stories seemed to engage this group more than direct questions related to the mentorship session.

"Well just remember to mind your attitude, time management, read ahead, ask for help, and don't keep it in and reach out. Anything else?" Jude began to wrap up the session. At this question, the room goes back into the familiar silence. "We have ten minutes more. [student name] - what's on your mind?" The student looked nervous for being called on; she looked around at her fellow classmates and then back at Jude, "Nothing," she says. "What works that we haven't touched on?" Jude asked to extend the time. When met with silence, Jude offered an announcement, "Oh yeah, the first Friday of December is a holiday called Farmer's Day so there won't be any classes. Any other thing?" Silence. "That's our 45 minutes. Okay see you all at the next session." Students did not immediately stand up and begin to leave. They sat for a moment. One student approached Jude's desk and began to ask him questions. As I packed up my items and left, some of the students remained in the room, as if waiting to speak with Jude privately.

Throughout this session, Jude tried several strategies to get students to talk about their experiences. He asked them questions directly about their experiences on campus, but especially with academics. He singled students out and asked the about issues they had discussed in previous sessions. In addition, he shared his own experiences with balancing academics and student life. Jude was comfortable with the silence and with engaging the students on their terms. This was the foundation of how Jude built relationships with students. As I would learn throughout my time at Ashesi, many of the relationships OSCA staff formed on campus began with small interactions that blossomed into incredible friendships. OSCA staff, however, like Jude, call these multiple experiences from memory in order to build these interactions into relationships. Jude's mentoring session served as an example of how OSCA staff plant seeds, like these interactions, that they foster and grow into impacting the university community and

fulfilling the mission of Ashesi University. OSCA staff plant similar seeds in facilitating skill development for Ashesi students.

Seeds of skill development

The second strategy that I observed OSCA staff employing to enact student and community affairs at Ashesi were in skill development. I mostly saw this strategy used by the OSCA career services staff. In my conversations with the career services staff, they discussed their career exploration and development curriculum that guided their work as part of the 4-year activity plan (Kwakwa and Adjei, 2015). Abigail, assistant director of career services, discussed the significance of these skills for fulfilling the mission at Ashesi:

> Ashesi is training ethical and entrepreneurial leaders with all these soft skills… looking at the liberal arts curriculum and all of that…but how do we measure what we're actually teaching the students and how do we assure that outside of their academics they're getting these soft skills training that they need so that when they go out there? Whether they're setting up their own businesses or their working for somebody or when they go to grad school they can show the skillsets that are needed out there...so we work along with faculty to make sure that that soft skill training is given to the students and then we also measure their performance out there through various mediums like employer evaluations and sometimes just go out there to them to find out how they're doing, what they're doing and all of that…so we try to measure the impact of the training that we're giving to the students here to make sure that we're actually churning the kind of graduates that we say we're churning out.

In addition to the relationships with students, the skills that OSCA staff provide for students is important to the mission of the institution. As Abigail expressed, her work is enacted through

helping students to develop skills to plant the seed from which their success will come. I observed a CV writing workshop facilitated by Abigail that serves as an example of the skill development strategy employed by OSCA staff.

Abigail's CV writing workshop. I arrived at the Norton-Motulsky Hall a few minutes after the CV writing workshop was supposed to begin and stood in a line of students waiting to get into the classroom. Norton-Motulsky Hall was the site of many of my observations and events at Ashesi. It was in the King Engineering Building and was split into two classrooms (A/B) that shared a modular wall. Today's CV Writing Session was in classroom A, which was the classroom farthest from the staircase at the entrance of the Engineering Building. As the line moved, I noticed that students were rolling the blue and gray chairs towards the classroom. Seeing this, I stepped out of line and walked back toward the entrance to the hall to classroom B. As I grabbed a chair from the classroom, I saw the signage that was in almost every classroom in Ashesi "Don't move the furniture." Like the students who were in line, I knew that space would probably be limited and made a note to return the chair after the session was over.

The career service team hosted several of these career development sessions throughout the year. OSCA staff facilitated these sessions as part of the activity plan (Kwakwa & Adjei, 2015) and directed specific sessions to specific classifications (first year, second year, third year, fourth year). The purpose of these sessions are to introduce students to career development skills such as career exploration, networking, internship preparation, and CV writing, which is the topic of today's session. Today's CV writing session was specifically for the "'17's," a moniker for the fourth year class preparing for the upcoming career fair. This was the final CV writing session of the semester that students had to attend if they wanted their CVs included in the career fair materials given to employers. The attendance confirmed the importance of this session. Over

one hundred students filled the room. Most were sitting with chairs already in the classroom or those borrowed from other classrooms. While there were twenty or so students standing along the perimeter of the space.

I found a spot for my chair near the lectern where Abigail stood. “Hurry up, hurry up, so that I can begin,” Abigail said as she motioned students with her hands into the room. We were already a couple of minutes past the start time and, with a crowd of this size, I knew that it would be a long session. “Okay are we ready?” she says breathlessly as the doors to the classroom finally closed. “I am just going to start here because we have a lot to cover.” She is looking at the projection screen where she has started a PowerPoint presentation. “My role today is to tell you directly how to write a CV resume. This is a guideline; there is no fast rule.” During my conversation with the career services staff and with Ruth, dean of students, they discussed past CV submissions for the career fair, internships, and other opportunities did not meet their expectations. So, while there were no “hard and fast rules,” as Abigail shared, there were expectations to the caliber of the documents. Abigail’s role today was to communicate those expectations to students.

“Does everyone have a job description? I may not have enough for everyone so you will have to share,” she began holding up the paper as demonstration of the document she was referencing. The job description had not yet reached our side of the room and a few students raised their hands to let her know that they had not received any. “Who has some that they can lend to this side of the room over there?” She looked around the room for volunteers and a few students offered job descriptions, which Abigail collected and redistributed. I shared with two students sitting near me. “Ok, so,” Abigail said, “when you read this, what are some of the skills they are looking for?”

Students responded, “Communication.”

“Leadership.”

“Microsoft Office.”

“Ok so give me an example of a skill that you have that matches what they are looking for.” Abigail scanned the room expectantly for volunteers. Almost immediately hands went up in response as students offered their experiences that matched to Abigail’s question. “Say more about that,” she said after a student offered an experience from his work with a student organization as an example of leadership. “How would you write that verbatim on your CV? How do you portray that to an employer and where would you say that?” she challenged. The student attempted an answer and other students added responses to aid his statement. “Good good,” she said, “others?”

After a few minutes of the activity, Abigail began to move through her presentation. Throughout the presentation, she asked questions about terms they may not be familiar with and, when they were unsure, she provided a definition for them. “Do you know what transferrable skills are?” When there is a murmur she interpreted as then not knowing the term, she explained transferrable skills and why they are important for them as students without full-time experience. “Don’t put French on your CV if all you can say is *je m'appelle*,” she cautioned. The room exploded in laughter at this suggestion. Some students began speaking in French rapidly while others repeated “*je m'appelle*.” “Ok, ok let’s continue,” Abigail redirected. She continued her presentation sharing CV writing tips that were applicable to students’ experiences and those that are common in student’s CVs. “I see this a lot about language skills, so just don’t do that.”

At times, students would stop her to ask questions about the presentation or some other topic. “Can we get your slides afterward?” a student asked expectantly. Abigail shook her head,

“I do not give out my slides because that makes you lazy. If you want more information, come by the center.” Other times, she would respond to a student question by informing them that many times, wording about job skills depend on the job description and referenced her earlier activity. While the main focus was on developing CV writing skills, Abigail also has to manage student behavioral issues. “That gentleman there, is he sleeping?” Abigail pointed toward the middle of the room at a student. Everyone turned in the direction she pointed and one of the students sitting near the weary student touched his arm to wake him. “Please sit up and pay attention because this is important,” she scolded. When she saw students on their phones, “I hope those in the back on their phones are looking at their CVs.” Students laughed at her reprimanding their colleagues.

With each of these distractions, Abigail returned to the CV writing session and focused on offering students usable and relatable skills that would improve their CV writing and marketing skills. She urged students to give specific examples of their skills on their resume. "You do not want to just say leadership; you want to say it specifically.” She provided a template to fill in their CV content: challenge, action, result. She encouraged them to use this template to discuss their experiences so that their CVs are more dynamic and demonstrate progression in their roles. When she provided an example of the challenge-action-result template on the screen, excited chatter reverberated throughout the room. She took that to mean that the students learned something from her session, “I know, eureka moment, right?”

> As the session drew to a close, Abigail flipped through the remaining slides quickly:
>
> So, that is the end, let me talk about this also: structure. We’ve talked a lot about form but not just structure. Everything aligns on the right hand side as well as the left hand side. And remember you save your CVs in PDF for the trouble of formatting issue. We

> will send out an email for CVs for the book. There are three submissions for the book. I don't understand students sometime. We take the time and make suggestions on CVs, but sometimes students send them back with the same CV unedited. You guys are adults so I'm hoping that the class of 2017 will have the best CVs." This comment produced shouts and claps for students. "Where is the sign-up sheet?" Abigail scanned the room for the sheet. When a student raised their hand with the sheet, she nodded and ended the session, "Okay that's it! Remember to take these chairs back to the other classroom if you got them from it.

Like Jude, after the session, students waited in the classroom to speak with Abigail. I spoke to her briefly as I got ready to leave and told her she did an incredible job managing such a large group of students. The '17s were engaged in her presentation, asking questions and answering questions as they learned how to improve their CV for the career fair. The CV writing session is an example of how OSCA staff enact their activity plan to ensure students receive the information to build the skills needed for them, especially in the context of career development, to represent themselves as entrepreneurial, ethical, and problem-solving leaders. In particular, Abigail stressed the importance of being specific and using the challenge-action-result template as a guide for students to market themselves to prospective employers.

Enacting student affairs practice as the planting of seeds. The purpose of Abigail's workshop was different from Jude's. Abigail's purpose was to ensure that students had discreet CV writing skills that would be demonstrated in the CV's that they turned into the career services staff for the job fair. As such, Abigail focused on these skills in her presentation to students. Conversely, the purpose of Jude's mentorship session was to build relationships with students in a more intimate format to be a resource for their transition as first-year students. Both

of these observations demonstrate strategies that OSCA staff employ to enact student and community affairs for Ashesi.

I chose to highlight my observation of the mentoring session and the CV writing session as examples of how OSCA staff enact the activity plan at Ashesi. Throughout both observations, Jude and Abigail modeled the problem-solving, entrepreneurial spirit that they hope to instill in the students at Ashesi. The observations helped me to understand that the OSCA staff saw their work as incremental, for example in how they built relationships with students, but also conceptualized their roles as skill developers in ensuring students received the skills necessary to carry out the mission of the university. Throughout these observations there was a consistent theme of OSCA staff enacting practice by using their interactions with students and other members of the university constituents as seeds for fulfilling the mission of Ashesi University. Building relationships and developing skills are central to how OSCA staff both conceptualize and enact student affairs practice at Ashesi University. OSCA staff focused on relationships understood that the "fruit" or outcomes of the "seeds" or relationships that they were building with students would become evident throughout the students' lifetime. Differently, OSCA staff focused on skill development expected more immediate "fruit" due to their responsibility within career services and ensuring that students demonstrated career development over their time in the university. However, OSCA staff focus on enacting their practice, their work is about planting seeds in students that will help them be successful throughout their time at Ashesi University. Out of these seeds that OSCA staff plant, come many fruit in the lives of their students. This was evident in my interviews with faculty, staff, students, and alumni about their perceptions of the OSCA staff.

Proverb 3: "We must always be aware of the roof."

OSCA conceptualized their role on campus as esteeming the mission of the institution through building relationships and skills of students. They worked with several university constituents – nonOSCA staff, faculty, students, and alumni – in order to fulfill the Ashesi mission. Fulfilling the mission required an entire campus effort with each faculty, staff, and student understanding how their role intersected with the campus mission. For OSCA though, their role, in this context, was not as wholly understood. Many of the institutions in Ghana have student services that are related but not as integrated within the mission of the institution (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012). I relate the third proverb to the third research question: How do university constituents – faculty, staff, students, non-OSCA staff, and alumni – perceive student and community affairs and OSCA staff members at Ashesi University? Here I chose the roof depicted on Ashesi's logo as an opportunity for interpretation:

> At a distance, the mark as a whole resembles a person standing under a roof, reflecting Ashesi's focus on the people in and around its community: students, teachers, parents and members of the broader society.

The roof represents how the university focuses on the internal and external community as part of its mission to impact the local Berekuso community, the national Ghanaian community, the continental African community, and the global community through their efforts. The roof here is important as a concept to understand also how the OSCA staff is perceived by the university community. I discuss three perceptions from the interviews with non-OSCA staff, students, faculty, and alumni: OSCA as relationship-builders, OSCA as student-centered advocates, and OSCA as mission-critical fulcrums.

OSCA Staff as Relationship-builders

As discussed previously, OSCA staff members enacted their practice by planting seeds with students through relationships and developing skills. Many of the university constituents described OSCA's role in terms of the relationships OSCA built with them or with other university constituents. As a new staff member charged with developing Ashesi's diversity efforts, Benardine, coordinator for diversity and international programs, needed advice and direction on how to connect with students. She found a resource in Madiba, assistant dean of students. In addition to giving her feedback on her program ideas, he also encouraged her to find ways to interact with students:

> He told me I should try and get to talk to the students; send them an email or just see them and say hi; as time goes on, there'll be conversations. I was doing that but the emailing part really started helping…. he also told me about the fact that students pull towards you easily when you understand them... and I feel it's with human nature too...if you don't understand me I don't see why I should be friends with you.

As a result of this advice, Benardine learned about the importance of relationship development with students and how to impact students through educational programming. Using both of these techniques, she better understood students and created opportunities for them to engage with different topics. Her relationship with Madiba was central to helping her to connect and engage with students as well as her socialization to the campus.

Similarly, Vanessa, an alumna and now faculty intern, discussed her friendship with the dean of students which began when she was a student:

> I've been really close friends with Dean K since I got here.…But yes, she has been a great source for me when it comes to literally everything. I can go see her about anything

> – whether it's grad school, stress from school, time management, relationships, all of that stuff…and even now, I still see her to chat about issues that I need more advice about. Yes, she's very open-minded, always willing to help, and just tell you a lot and I really admire that.

Her continued relationship with the dean of students indicates how formed relationships with individuals impact the perception of OSCA on campus. In this way, OSCA becomes represented by the individuals who work within the organization rather than by just what they do for the campus. By way of these individual relationships, participants extrapolate about the importance of OSCA on campus.

This was especially true for Aba a fourth year student at Ashesi. She developed a relationship with Jude which helped to connect her with OSCA on campus:

> …before Jude came in, all I'll do with the staff – would say hi and pass by. But then, having conversations with him, made me more interested in the work he does, and he's usually looking up, "How are you doing? How is this going? Have you tried this? This opportunity will be great for you…working and being friends with Jude has been great.

Jude's outreach and continuous conversations provided a foundation for building relationships where he helped to guide Aba's trajectory as a MasterCard scholar. Later, Aba shared how she saw Jude building relationships and spoke to qualities he possessed that made this possible:

> I see that other students are attracted to him because he knows what to say for every conversation. I don't know how, but he has insights into pretty much all topics that you'll bring up. So no matter what field it is in, he can say something or he can refer you to somebody else. So I think that with other students who are interested in other things, once you have found Jude, you can talk about anything at all, and then it flows with him, so I

think it's more like a magnet. He attracts people with it. It works well.

The relationships that Jude formed with his "insights into pretty much all topics" and his relationships around campus to refer students are critical to helping to guide students on the campus and beyond.

OSCA Staff as Student-centered Advocates

Perhaps one of the most echoed statements about the perception of OSCA on campus was about OSCA representing the student voice and being advocates for students to faculty, staff, and administration. The relationships they formed around campus were critical to them advocating on behalf of students. One of the alumnus I spoke with, Andrew, shared that his interactions with members of the staff were always positive. In addition, he wished that he would have interacted with the staff more based on these interactions late during his time at Ashesi. As such, he shared this positive envisioning of the role of OSCA on campus and how critical building and maintaining relationships with students are for the campus. He also discussed how these relationships should be used to advocate for students and improve the student experience. Without OSCA, Andrew shared "the student voice will not be heard in the walls of management, if I should put it that way, because they know us very well and they can speak for us when we're not around."

This was also discussed by Aba, director of human resources at Ashesi. She credited her conversations with OSCA staff as the reason why her office adopted a student-centered philosophy on hiring:

> If I didn't hear what OSCA said about what the students' complaints were, I'll just hire really, really amazing academics and that's it. I wouldn't even understand the need to look at their personality. I would have never thought of when the student needs someone,

what do they want to see?

In hiring, OSCA's advocating for student-centered perspective influenced how Aba thinks about all different levels of hiring for the campus. In this way, OSCA is perceived as not only being centered on the student experience in their programs and services, but also how other parts of the campus affects students beginning with who works on campus. Similarly, OSCA become critical for the mission of the university as perceived by other university constituents.

OSCA Staff as Mission-critical Fulcrums

When I asked participants to imagine Ashesi without OSCA, most participants had difficulty in doing so. For Aba, she could not envision the university without OSCA staff who represented how Ashesi's mission was carried out:

> There will be no point. There will be no point. They really understand what Ashesi wants to create, and they catch everything. They really understand it. I don't even know how I would have done it without OSCA. Yeah, maybe we would have caught a few academic issues, but who's going to know that somebody's parents are divorced, and that's what is affecting their academics? All we know is, the person is failing and we're going to give them more tutorials but that's it. That will be it. The person is not going to get better because we're giving them more tutorials. They need that one person to sit and say, "Look, you need to focus on school; what do you want to do?"

For Aba, OSCA staff are critical to Ashesi, especially as it related to viewing students' needs holistically. This holistic view of student success is related to the mission of Ashesi in how they expect students to demonstrate ethical, entrepreneurial leadership. Faculty also discussed OSCA's role in ensuring the mission of the university. According to Charles, engineering faculty

member, Ashesi's mission would be difficult to implement without OSCA orienting students to the schools' values:

> OSCA does a big favor to the campus during the freshman orientation – in exposing the kids to what we're about and how the school works. If there was not an OSCA and we had this kind of people show up and go into a room – and never had any formal introduction to the school, it will be a lot harder on us as instructors to get the ball rolling in the freshman year.

OSCA's orientation and the work of their newly formed mentorship program was essential to ensuring that students understand the expectation of ethics for the school and help to aid in their educational orientation to the campus. In this way and in supporting students, OSCA staff become a mission-critical fulcrum upon which other areas of the campus, but in particular faculty can operate. Ebenezer, the director of development and an Ashesi alumnus summed this up well:

> I think the best adjective I'll use is critical. A lot of what happens even though we like to think the classroom is very important, how engaged students are in the classroom, how they engage with our students and the kind of alumni they become, depends very much on OSCA's work. If OSCA's work doesn't happen, or doesn't exist, we'd have a lot of – forgive my use of the word, but zombies coming through Ashesi and taking test and then just graduate, and they're done with it, and so that kind of student life or Student Services approach really helps. Like Career Services – counseling is important, getting them engaged in clubs and activities, all those things are super important. Because the classroom work is only for the four years, but the stuff that happens after the classroom is what creates engaged graduates – students who graduate, and they're still very highly

> engaged with Ashesi and what Ashesi is doing. And of course, Student Services here, also guides faculty on how to engage in the classroom, on how to make sure the students are getting on with the work and all of that. So they work very closely with the Provost and so it's like OSCA is essentially, or should essentially be involved in everything that's happening on campus, and so I think it's critical. You could pretty much say it's the fulcrum of the Ashesi experience.

Here, Ebenezer uses the words "critical" and "fulcrum" to describe OSCA's impact on students. He connected OSCA's work directly with his own – engaging alumni and potential donors – and as essential for ensuring the outcomes that are expected for an Ashesi education experiences. As such, in their supporting the mission as a fulcrum, OSCA staff are critical to the mission of the campus.

Conclusion

After the laughter died and teasing about Madiba's comments shared during the workshop-presentation to OSCA staff subsided, I shared with the staff:

> I was struck by how this is you all's purpose. I was very much struck by this idea that you found your purpose…and that's what you are helping students to do. So, you're modeling this idea…of what it means to find your purpose.

Throughout this chapter, OSCA staff's purpose was clear: to fulfill the mission of Ashesi university through their respective roles in student and community affairs. Each of the proverbs represent aspects of this purpose as well as how other university constituents perceive OSCA's role on campus.

Within the context of Ghana, the stool represents the soul of the people. Because of the spiritual sacredness of the stool, there must always be a covering that protects the stool from the

ground as protocol for its handling. I represent the mission of Ashesi as a stool and that OSCA staff conceptualized student and community affairs as the covering that protects the sacredness of the mission in the proverb: *Always take a covering, the stool must not touch the ground.* Using a 4-year activity plan, OSCA staff employ two strategies for enacting student and community affairs at Ashesi: building relationships with the university community and skill development with students. I imagine these strategies as seed OSCA staff plant to achieve the fruit or outcomes as outlined in the mission of Ashesi as stated in the second proverb or finding for this study: *Out of one seed comes many fruit.* Finally, university constituents view OSCA staff as mission-critical fulcrums who build relationships around campus and operate as student advocates ensuring that students are supported on campus. Here they operate as the roof of the campus providing shelter, which the campus is aware of as part of the university operations. In the final proverb, *Always be aware of the roof*, I represent OSCA's role in fulfilling the mission of the institution as perceived by other university constituents.

While the participants offer suggestions for how OSCA's operations could be improved, which will be discussed in chapter 5, the participants' perception of OSCA demonstrates their importance on the campus and in fulfilling the mission of the university. The perception of OSCA by participants demonstrate this proverb as throughout the interviews, there was a respect for OSCA's work as relationship-builders, student-centered advocates, and mission-critical fulcrums who impacted their own lives directly. These perceptions connect well with the other two findings of the research of how OSCA staff conceptualize and enact student affairs practice. In sum, all of these proverbs represent OSCA staff's purpose at Ashesi: they are mission-fulfillers who employ the strategies of building relationships with the university community and developing students' skills in order to enact student and community affairs at Ashesi University.

This purpose, not only has an impact on students, but also on how the university community understands their role in helping students on the campus. I could not agree with Madiba more: *It doesn't feel like work, this is purpose.*

CHAPTER 5

TOWARDS AN AFRICAN-CENTERED FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE

Yet Ghana shows its might and power
Not in its color nor its flower
But in its wondrous breadth of soul
Its Joy of Life
Its selfless role
Of giving…
Awake, awake, O sleeping world
Honor the sun;
Worship the stars, those vaster suns
Who rule the night
Where black is bright
And all unselfish work is right
And Greed is Sin.
And Africa leads on:
Pan Africa!
(DuBois, 1963, p. 2).

To get to Ashesi on the days for data collection, I had to either take a taxi or the van transport system, called a trow-trow, to Haatso. If I arrived in Haatso between 7:00 a.m. until 7:15 a.m., I would take the Ashesi bus to the institution. This was my preferred transportation. In addition to not having to do any more connections, the bus was air conditioned, so there was no need for the windows to be opened allowing the red-brown dust to come into the vehicle. I also had an opportunity to talk with various Ashesi students, staff, and faculty on the ride to the campus. However, if I arrived after 7:15 a.m., I would take another taxi or trow-trow to the Kwabenya taxi station. At Kwabenya, I would take another taxi into Berekuso and then to Ashesi. Sometimes, I would share a ride with others who were going into Berekuso or the

occasional Ashesi community member. Usually, though, I reserved an entire taxi for the ride to Ashesi. About one mile outside of Kwabenya, the paved road would abruptly stop and, with a jolt, the driver would begin to navigate the bumps and holes and traffic. In total, the journey took an hour to complete and I miss the journey, the people of Ashesi University, my host family, and the country of Ghana. I dedicate this incredible learning process to my host family and the participants in this study.

Ghana called me and I kept answering, "Yes." It first called me in an email about a study abroad in education program to the country. And then it called me when the faculty coordinator for the trip suggested that I find ways to incorporate the project for the study abroad trip into my current research. It called me as I began searching for how student affairs and services is organized within Ghanaian higher education. It called me as I began sharing and being connected with scholars and practitioners in Ghana. It called me to Ashesi and to OSCA. In his *Ghana Calls,* DuBois (1963) dedicates his journey to Ghana to Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana following independence from British colonial rule. I chose to include this poem at the beginning of each of the chapters in this dissertation because it symbolizes my own journey of being called to Ghana and to the continent to understand another perspective on student affairs in the context of higher education.

In Chapter 4, I shared what I learned about student and community affairs at Ashesi University that I represented as proverbs connected to the logo of Ashesi University. In this chapter, I will explore four implications of this research: the significance of mission, assessment as a contextualization strategy, creating a student-centered model of practice, and decentering Western models/(re)creating African models for student affairs practice. Immediately following

the discussion of each implications, I will discuss future research that can help further explore student affairs and services in Ghana and on the continent of Africa.

The Significance of Mission

According to the MasterCard Foundation, the continent of Africa has the youngest population in the world and, by 2035, will have the "largest labor force" in the world (MasterCard Foundation Mission, 2017). As a result, MasterCard has focused its efforts on providing resources to develop several areas on the continent, especially higher education which in the past has been neglected by world finance organizations (Brock-Utne, 2003; Clay, 2015; Materu, 2006; Novy-Marx, 2016; UNESCO, 2003; World Bank, 1988). Higher education is a critical development strategy for previously colonized countries like Ghana to build their educated talent who would, in turn, contribute to the increased infrastructure and industrial development (Clay, 2015). As this study highlights for Ghana, institutions of higher education can focus their mission on developing the human resources that will help in creating solutions to country's progress. Student affairs and services, in support of this mission, can be critical for a national development agenda for higher education.

Throughout this study, I saw how important enacting the mission of Ashesi was to the participants. Ashesi's mission is

> To educate a new generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders in Africa; to cultivate within our students the critical thinking skills, concern for others and courage it will take to transform a continent (ABIG, 2015, p. 9).

The mission of the institution centered on ethics, entrepreneurship, leadership, critical thinking, empathy, and courage as the key outcomes for students who will "transform a continent" (ABIG, 2015, p. 9). Ashesi's mission links the outcomes of a liberal arts education with a focus on

ethical leadership, entrepreneurial problem-solving, and empathetic community engagement as a mechanism to contribute to the development of the Ghanaian and African context (ABIG, 2015). By centering the mission of Ashesi in conceptualizing and enacting student and community affairs, OSCA staff demonstrate a model for how student affairs and services can contribute to a mission like Ashesi's that is connected to a national and continental development strategy (Clay, 2015). Other Ghanaian and African institution can adapt Ashesi's strategy and center their curriculum and co-curriculum on a mission that communicates how their institutions can contribute to a development strategy in their respective contexts. Further, this mission should be enacted throughout the campus, especially in student affairs and services areas to ensure the outcomes for students leaving the institution.

Future research on higher education and student affairs in Ghana and on the continent should focus on the outcomes that are essential to a national and continental development strategy. In addition, this research should also incorporate what of these outcomes contribute to this development. So, while over 90% of Ashesi University alumni remain on the continent rather than leaving due to lack of career mobility, future research can help to illuminate what, from their education at Ashesi keeps them on the continent. Further, this research can also operationalize the outcomes in the mission statement and demonstrate how these outcomes show up post-graduation. Institutions, like Ashesi, can incorporate a comprehensive assessment strategy that can begin to inform a systematic continental research agenda as well as help in the contextualization of Western models on the continent.

Assessment as a Strategy for Contextualization

Student and community affairs contextualized their work to the institutional mission similar to how Ashesi contextualized liberal arts for West Africa. Many of the OSCA staff drew

on their own experiences as undergraduate students, work at other institutions, or scholarship, based in the Western context, to develop strategies for their work. As the first liberal arts institution in West Africa, Ashesi uses American liberal arts institutions as a model for how they create ethical, entrepreneurial, and critical thinking leaders for and from the continent of Africa. OSCA staff create programs, services, and initiatives that support the mission and support Ashesi's work as a liberal arts institution. This contextualization is critical for African institutions of higher education operating in the post-colonial context (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Contextualization centers the need for African knowledge as part of the operation of an institution (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). By centering the knowledge of student affairs operations and applying it to the university operations, African institutions can contextualize other models of higher education and student affairs and services to their specific needs. Similarly, student and community affairs at Ashesi should practice this contextualization in creating a knowledge base for their campus and aligning that knowledge base with the institutional mission.

Assessment should be incorporated as a strategy to contextualize promising practices and models of student affairs practice from other institutions and countries to Ashesi and Ghana. As part of a presentation of these initial findings to the OSCA staff during my time at Ashesi, I facilitated a workshop about writing outcomes and measuring these outcomes to understand the effectiveness of OSCA programs, initiatives, and services. I recognize that even assessment practices from my education in the American-Western context need to be adapted to the Ghanaian-African context. During the workshop, I facilitated a discussion with staff about anecdotes of effectiveness from their work and brainstorming how those successes could be measured.

Future research is needed to understand the process of contextualization for Ashesi and other institutions in the African context. Through colonization, many African countries lost connections with specific cultural practices of educating and preparing their populations for roles within their society (Nkrumah, 1943; Okrah, 2003). The colonial power, in this case Britain, replaced the educational system of the country with their own resulting in a system of education that benefitted colonial powers versus the people of the country. In particular, this research should focus on how to use local African knowledge gained through assessment methods to inform contextualization efforts.

Towards a Student-Centered Model of Student Affairs Practice

I used Manning & Schuh's (2014) student-centered models of practice to design this research study. What I found through my research, however, was that OSCA staff operated through a mission-centered model of practice, but focused on students as the conduit of their practice. As a result, students were the objects upon which OSCA staff acted to inculcate institutional outcomes. The OSCA staff discussed wanting students to be more empowered on and off campus in their leadership roles. This is in direct conflict with how OSCA staff discussed their work in fulfilling the mission of the institution. My own reading of Ashesi's mission statement shows the implicit focus on putting the outcomes in students rather than an empowerment ethos for helping students to understand their specific skillset and contribution to the mission.

During the workshop I facilitated, OSCA staff communicated that they wanted to know directly from students about their perception of OSCA staff. For Ashesi, in particular, formal program evaluations can help staff to get an understanding of student perception. Emerging research from the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* demonstrate research on student

experiences at African institutions also illuminate how researchers can contribute to a student empowerment strategy within student affairs (e.g. Adesoji & Jeremiah, 2015; Faeeqa & James, 2016; Janice, 2016).

Decentering Western Models and (Re)creating African Models

Local knowledge in the context of Ashesi and other institutions on the African continents build toward a decentering of the Western models of student affairs practice. I designed this study by imagining student and community affairs at Ashesi as a form of intercultural contextualization. Within this framework, OSCA staff would incorporate multiple understandings of their work and adapt those multiple perspectives to the cultural context of Ashesi and Ghana. Through this, OSCA staff would be decentering single cultural epistemologies toward a more pluralistic and global understanding of student affairs and services. I saw this through my interviews with OSCA staff; they drew from their experiences as undergraduates, graduate students, readings, and other work experiences. Still, the already established systems of Western convention is alluring for OSCA staff having to create so much of their work from scratch without established frameworks as resource.

While Western models provide a reference point for OSCA staff, their work to create interventions for students specific to their context is particularly important in the work of creating an African-centered framework for student affairs. By embodying the mission of the institution through their work, OSCA staff model how the mission of Ashesi can be operationalized. They demonstrate to students how to live the mission of Ashesi – ethical leadership, entrepreneurial problem solving, critical thinking, and concern for others – meant to "transform the continent" (ABIG, 2015, p. 9). They are informal cultural educators for students for how such a bold mission can be accomplished (Okrah, 2003). This dynamic transmission of

culture balanced between helping students understand the complexities of the present reality of the various contexts (institutional, local, national, continental, and international) while also empowering and preparing students for the future the students were being asked to create. This model demonstrates a reconciliation between the traditional Ghanaian authoritarian leadership structures discussed by Boakye-Yiadom (2012; 2015) and introduces another model for student affairs practice that is mission-centered and student-focused.

Future research on student affairs practice needs to be a focus of research throughout the continent of Africa. As shared in the introduction of this study, most of the understanding of student affairs is focused in South Africa (e.g., Luescher-Mamshela, Moja, & Schreiber, 2013; Mandew, 2003; Moja et al., 2014). For example, the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHOI) has a branch of its efforts in South Africa and has held trainings and workshops for residence life staff to share and learn practices (Schuh, 2014). This is crucial to continue to understand how student affairs works in the context of Africa and how different contexts call for different methods of practice due to the "diversity in terms of higher education systems that have been shaped by colonial legacies, subsequent administrations, and global, local, and continental influences" (Moja et al., 2014, p. 1). In addition to a national consortium of student affairs practice, a continental consortium for student affairs would guide shared knowledge and practices towards an African-informed perspective on student affairs practice.

What OSCA Can Teach Western Student Affairs

At the end of every day, I would journey from Ashesi back to my homestead to eat dinner, journal or review notes, and visit with my host family. They were a retired couple who had lived in Germany for forty years and decided that they would build a house and retire in

Ghana. Uncle and Auntie were amazing hosts and became family during the data collection phase of this study. Often, Uncle would ask me: "How was Genesis?" He called Ashesi that because of its Akan-Twi translation to English of "new beginning." I would answer: "Genesis was well today, uncle." And he would ask, "And how was Exodus?," referring to the order of the books of the Bible. My response would always be "I do not know Exodus yet, Uncle because I am just at the beginning of Genesis." As I began thinking about the implications of this research outside of Ashesi and Ghana, this exchange with Uncle always came to mind as a reminder of the work that must continue in learning about higher education and student affairs in the African-Ghanaian context. This case study left me with many more questions about Ashesi University operations and its impact for its alumni, on the local community of Berekuso, and the larger national, continental and global contexts of higher education. The proverbs that I use to represent the findings for this study are the lessons that Ashesi University taught me that can be critical lessons for higher education in Western contexts and those that choose to use Western contexts as a model.

Always carry a covering, the stool must not touch the ground is instructive about the role of student affairs in higher education to protect the mission of the institution and enact that mission keeping the students as the focus. This mission connects with people in such a way that they can see how their role connects to and furthers the mission. In Western contexts, the missions are often espoused but less frequently enacted with such a fervent belief. Perhaps this is because there is no need to continue to find ways to thrive when one's perspective, culture, and theories dominate the world. OSCA staff demonstrate that student affairs can be directly tied to a national and continental development strategy specifically through how institutional agents write and impart its mission. *Out of one seed comes many fruit* teaches about how student affairs

practitioners can use their interactions with the university community to enact the mission of the institution. Each interaction served as part of their cultivation of the seeds planted to ensure the outcomes described in the mission. The intentionality, patience, and persistence of the OSCA staff in enacting the mission demonstrates the greater purpose of student affairs. Western higher education and student affairs need more than just espousing their mission and values, but an unwavering commitment of action toward enacting the mission. *We must always remember the roof* is one of the most critical lessons for Western higher education. OSCA staff could not do their jobs sitting at their desks on their computers nor could they do it just on their campus, but they had to work within the university community and with the external community to enact a mission about the transformation of the continent. As easy as it could be to just stay on "the hill," as Ashesi was sometimes called, OSCA staff pushed students, the university community, and even themselves to connect their work to outside of the institution. This means that OSCA staff are not viewing the relationship university or external community as transactional, but as partners in enacting the mission of the institution. The roof provides a shelter whether we are aware of it or not; so should missions of higher education operate to improve the lives of people. As Ashesi continues to grow and moves through Genesis and into Exodus, I look forward to the lessons and the promising practices of the Office of Student and Community Affairs for global student affairs and services.

My Response to When Ghana Calls

Two years ago, I responded to an email announcement about the Ghana Study Abroad in Education Program at the University of Georgia (Study Abroad in Ghana, n.d.). I had always wanted to study abroad throughout my educational career and never got the opportunity. So, when I saw the opportunity that would not conflict with my course of study and would be

focused in education, I immediately emailed the trip coordinator, Dr. Cynthia Dillard. Coincidentally, I read Dr. Dillard's work as a doctoral student and included her perspective on the proliferation of paradigms and research as responsibility in this volume (Dillard, 2006a; 2006b). After meeting and talking with her about the trip, I thought about how my research on the socialization experiences of student affairs practitioners could be enhanced by learning about higher education and student affairs in the context of Ghana, West Africa. However, seeing the dearth of literature on the topic and beginning conversations with individuals familiar with the topic, I saw an opportunity to contribute to literature and understanding of Ghanaian student affairs practice. I had so many questions about how I would engage in this research having never visited Ghana or done research abroad. This trepidation never discouraged me from engaging in the research because, as I would soon learn, Ghana calls and I could only respond, "Yes."

As part of the study abroad experience, I examined my researcher perspective in preparation for the dissertation process, which I discussed in chapter 3 and in-depth in Martin (in press). The 12 days I spent in Ghana in December 2015 was incredibly transformative and inspiring. I visited Ashesi, learned about education and culture in Ghana, met Dr. Michael Boakye-Yiadom and began to plan for a return trip the following fall for data collection. Through journaling and discussions with the other trip participants, I could better articulate my own paradigm and approach to research. I no longer ignored my own feelings and intuition as a source of knowledge, but became more aware of how feelings-as-epistemology guided my research approach. I was no longer ashamed to express my faith as part of my value system and how engaging in prayer was critical to my research identity. In Ghana, I was constantly in prayer and communing with God and I felt "..the peace of God, which passeth all understanding…" (Philippians 4:7, King James Version).

When I returned to the United States after that first trip, I felt immediately jolted back to what hooks (2008) called "the culture of belonging" (p. 7), which was a constant search for place and comfort. Why was it that when I was in Ghana, I did not feel this need? Why did I long to go back to Ghana and feel that peace again? God moved every single possible barrier out of my way in order to go: Ashesi University approved my proposal; Institutional Review Boards for Ashesi University and the University of Georgia approved the study without delay; I received a scholarship that paid for the majority of the trip; I connected with an amazing host family whose hospitality eased my transition to Ghana. The joy of my life for the two months I was in Ghana October until November 2016 was journeying to Ashesi and interviewing and observing participants for this study. I never wanted the experience to end. The participants in this study became my teachers and my guides and my inspiration. When a student decided she no longer wanted to attend the institution because she did not think she could be successful, the OSCA staff and faculty and students came together to devise a plan for her success. They met with the student and her parents to discuss strategies for her success. In fulfilling the mission of the institution, OSCA staff used their relationships on campus to ensure the student having all of the necessary resources to remain part of the community.

By answering "yes" to Ghana's call, I learned about the transformative power of education and how higher education, but more specifically student affairs, could be part of a national and even continental development strategy. By answering "yes" to Ghana's call, I learned to adapt my research strategy and my research plan to what the context and participants required. By answering "yes" to Ghana's call, my perspective stretched regarding promising practices in higher education and student affairs for student success and persistence; a small, liberal arts institution in Ghana, West Africa had just as much to offer to the conversation as a

prestigious, world-class institution in the United States, European, or Asian context. By answering "yes" to Ghana's call, I recalled and (re)membered, as Dillard (2006b) discussed, my connections to the African diaspora that were severed by the transatlantic slave trade. Throughout my time in Ghana in 2015 and then in 2016, a song would come to mind any time I was faced with a challenge: "Farther along we'll know all about it, farther along we'll understand why; cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine, we'll understand it all by and by" (Stevens, 1911). By answering "yes" to Ghana's call, I am understanding Ghanaian higher education, student affairs, and myself as a scholar-practitioner by and by. Ghana is still calling and I cannot wait to answer "yes" again.

Conclusion

This case study research explored how the Office of Student and Community Affairs staff at Ashesi University conceptualize and enact student and community affairs in the context of a private, liberal arts institution in Ghana, West Africa. The mission of Ashesi to inspire and educate the next generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders for and from the continent of Africa provided an excellent case study in which to understand this phenomenon. This case study research explored how student affairs practice is conceptualized and enacted in the context of a private liberal arts institution in Ghana, West Africa. Ashesi University provided an excellent case to study how student affairs could operate with a focus on mission and enacting practice through the mission with the staff of the Office of Student and Community Affairs. Without a formal background in student affairs, OSCA staff still conceptualize and enact their practice with the mission of the institution in mind and with a focus on cultivating relationships and developing skills in students as how they enact the mission of the institution. Other university constituents perceive this work as critical to the mission and operation of the university, which

speaks to the importance of student affairs in the larger context of higher education of Ghana, Africa, and globally. The implications for the local, national, continental, and global context center on how student affairs practice should be contextualized to different environments and local knowledge and expertise be part of this contextualization. In addition, there should be a sharing of information across these different contexts to build an infrastructure for student affairs and services within higher education. This research adds to literature on student affairs practice in Ghana and helps to inform a country-specific contribution to the larger understanding of African student affairs practice. May Ghana and Africa continue to "lead on" (DuBois, 1963, p. 2).

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Appendix A

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
ASHESI UNIVERSITY
CONSENT FORM – OSCA Staff
A Case Study of Student Affairs Practice at a Liberal Arts Institution in Ghana

Researcher's Statement

We are asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator: Chris Linder
Counseling and Human Development Services
oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com

Co-Investigator Jillian Martin
Counseling and Human Development Services
oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the work of the Office of Student and Community Affairs staff at Ashesi University. We are recruiting OSCA staff for this study. The results of this study will be used to inform work with higher education students in Ghana and internationally.

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to …

- Participate in two 60-minute audio-recorded interviews to talk about your background and experiences as an OSCA staff member at Ashesi University
- At the initial and subsequent interview, bring a document and/or artifact that describes your work as an OSCA staff meeting
- Collaborate with the researcher to identify opportunities for observing OSCA staff work and permit the researcher to engage in the observation
- Review interview transcripts and study findings to ensure accuracy of statements and clarity of findings

Risks and discomforts

- We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.

Benefits

- By participating in this study, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your work as an OSCA staff member at Ashesi University

- This study will add to the literature on higher education in Ghana and provide perspective on the innovative approach to higher education at Ashesi University.
- The researcher, Jillian Martin, will facilitate a workshop on student affairs practice based on the needs of the OSCA staff at Ashesi University.

Audio Recording
Each interview will be audio recorded that will be transcribed. Following transcription and data analysis, the transcription will be destroyed. The audio recordings are needed to be sure that all of the data from the interviews are gathered to be analyzed by the investigator.

Please provide initials below if you agree to have this interview audio recorded or not. You may still participate in this study even if you are not willing to have the interview recorded.

_____I do not want to have this interview recorded.
_____I am willing to have this interview recorded.

Privacy/Confidentiality
The data collected from the interviews will be confidential and will only be shared with members of the research team to answer the research questions of the study and develop a manuscript for publication. The data will not include any identifying information. We will analyze the data in the aggregate and no individual responses will be tied to individual participants. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia and Ashesi University responsible for regulatory and research oversight. Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

Taking part is voluntary
Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

The data we collect from you will identify you will be confidential. Your identity will be tied to the study with the consent form you are currently reading that will be kept under lock and key for a period of five years that only the investigators will have access. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia and Ashesi University responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

If you have questions
The main researchers conducting this study are Dr. Chris Linder, assistant professor and Ms. Jillian Martin, doctoral candidate, at the University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Dr. Chris Linder

(oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com) and Ms. Jillian Martin (oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu. This research protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Ashesi University Human Subjects Review Committee. If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Chair, Ashesi University HSCR, (**adafla@ashesi.edu.gh**).

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered. It also indicates that you self-select eligibility and meet the eligibility requirements outlines above.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

_____	_____
Name of Participant	Email Address

_____	_____
Signature	Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
ASHESI UNIVERSITY
CONSENT FORM – Students and Alumni
A Case Study of Student Affairs Practice at a Liberal Arts Institution in Ghana

Researcher's Statement
We are asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

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Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to explore the work of the Office of Student and Community Affairs staff at Ashesi University. We are recruiting Ashesi University students and alumni who have engaged with OSCA staff at Ashesi University. The results of this study will be used to inform work with higher education students in Ghana and internationally.

Study Procedures
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to …
- Participate an interview for no more than one hour to discuss your experiences with and perceptions of the OSCA staff
- Review interview transcripts and study findings to ensure accuracy of statements and clarity of findings

Risks and discomforts
- We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.

Benefits
- By participating in this study, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your time at Ashesi as a student and how OSCA staff have been part of that time
- This study will add to the literature on higher education in Ghana and provide perspective on the innovative approach to higher education at Ashesi University.

Audio Recording

Each interview will be audio recorded that will be transcribed. Following transcription and data analysis, the transcription will be destroyed. The audio recordings are needed to be sure that all of the data from the interviews are gathered to be analyzed by the investigator.

Please provide initials below if you agree to have this interview audio recorded or not. You may still participate in this study even if you are not willing to have the interview recorded.

_____I do not want to have this interview recorded.
_____I am willing to have this interview recorded.

Privacy/Confidentiality
The data collected from the interviews will be confidential and will only be shared with members of the research team to answer the research questions of the study and develop a manuscript for publication. The data will not include any identifying information. We will analyze the data in the aggregate and no individual responses will be tied to individual participants. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia and Ashesi University responsible for regulatory and research oversight. Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

Taking part is voluntary
Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

The data we collect from you will identify you will be confidential. Your identity will be tied to the study with the consent form you are currently reading that will be kept under lock and key for a period of five years that only the investigators will have access. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia and Ashesi University responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

If you have questions

The main researchers conducting this study are Dr. Chris Linder, assistant professor and Ms. Jillian Martin, doctoral candidate, at the University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Dr. Chris Linder (oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com) and Ms. Jillian Martin (oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu. This research protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Ashesi University Human

Subjects Review Committee. If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Chair, Ashesi University HSCR, (**adafla@ashesi.edu.gh**).

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered. It also indicates that you self-select eligibility and meet the eligibility requirements outlines above.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

_____	_____
Name of Participant	Email Address

_____	_____
Signature	Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
ASHESI UNIVERSITY
CONSENT FORM – Faculty and non-OSCA administrators
A Case Study of Student Affairs Practice at a Liberal Arts Institution in Ghana

Researcher's Statement
We are asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator: Chris Linder
Counseling and Human Development Services
oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com

Co-Investigator Jillian Martin
Counseling and Human Development Services
oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to explore the work of the Office of Student and Community Affairs staff at Ashesi University. We are recruiting Ashesi University faculty and non-OSCA administrators who are currently employed at Ashesi University who have engaged with OSCA staff at Ashesi University. The results of this study will be used to inform work with higher education students in Ghana and internationally.

Study Procedures
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to …
- Participate an interview for no more than one hour to discuss your experiences with and perceptions of the OSCA staff
- Review interview transcripts and study findings to ensure accuracy of statements and clarity of findings

Risks and discomforts
- We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.

Benefits
- By participating in this study, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your time at Ashesi as a faculty or non-OSCA administrator and how OSCA staff have been part of that time
- This study will add to the literature on higher education in Ghana and provide perspective on the innovative approach to higher education at Ashesi University.

Audio Recording

Each interview will be audio recorded that will be transcribed. Following transcription and data analysis, the transcription will be destroyed. The audio recordings are needed to be sure that all of the data from the interviews are gathered to be analyzed by the investigator.

Please provide initials below if you agree to have this interview audio recorded or not. You may still participate in this study even if you are not willing to have the interview recorded.

_____I do not want to have this interview recorded.
_____I am willing to have this interview recorded.

Privacy/Confidentiality
The data collected from the interviews will be confidential and will only be shared with members of the research team to answer the research questions of the study and develop a manuscript for publication. The data will not include any identifying information. We will analyze the data in the aggregate and no individual responses will be tied to individual participants. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia and Ashesi University responsible for regulatory and research oversight. Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

Taking part is voluntary
Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

The data we collect from you will identify you will be confidential. Your identity will be tied to the study with the consent form you are currently reading that will be kept under lock and key for a period of five years that only the investigators will have access. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia and Ashesi University responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

If you have questions
The main researchers conducting this study are Dr. Chris Linder, assistant professor and Ms. Jillian Martin, doctoral candidate, at the University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Dr. Chris Linder (oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com) and Ms. Jillian Martin (oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu. This research protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Ashesi University Human Subjects Review Committee. If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Chair, Ashesi University HSCR, (**adafla@ashesi.edu.gh**).

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered. It also indicates that you self-select eligibility and meet the eligibility requirements outlines above.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

_____	_____
Name of Participant	Email Address

_____	_____
Signature	Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher

Appendix B
Ashesi Research Site Proposal

Research Background and Purpose

As higher education expands globally, student affairs and services are also expanding to meet increasing demands of institutions and their students. The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) began in 2010 as a consortium "to promote international dialogue around higher education policy, best practices, and the evaluation of student services" (Zereik & Seeto, 2014, p. 25). IASAS communicates a vision for international student affairs and services that is student-centered, holistic, and culturally informed. In addition, it promotes student affairs and services supporting the mission of higher education to promote citizenry and betterment of society.

The ideals espoused by IASAS are central in the mission and vision of Ashesi University. The entire campus collaborates to inspire the next generation of ethical, entrepreneurial, solution-oriented leaders for and from the continent of Africa (Awuah & Gouillart, 2009). In the context of African higher education, scholars espouse higher education as a means for countries to develop infrastructure, promote cultural ideals, and create the next generation of leaders (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; Varghese, 2006). Student affairs is emerging as a profession on the continent, with most of the work centered in South Africa (Boakye-Yiadom, 2012; Mandew, 2003). While this foundational work is important, there is a need to understand the interplay of the cultural context of Ghana with student affairs practice as outlined by IASAS. Ashesi University's founding as a response to the reality of Ghana and its mission-vision focus make it an ideal institution in which to understand culturally informed student affairs practice in the context of Ghana.

Building on this need for research on student affairs in the Ghanaian context, I am proposing a qualitative case study of student affairs practitioners at Ashesi University as an example of culturally informed student affairs practice. This research will address the following questions:

1. How do the OSCA staff conceptualize student affairs practice at Ashesi University?
2. How do the OSCA staff enact student affairs practice at Ashesi University?
3. How do other constituents (e.g. faculty, students, administrators, alumni) describe the role of OSCA staff at Ashesi University?

Research Approach

To understand the work of student affairs practitioners at Ashesi, I propose using a qualitative case study research methodology. Qualitative research focuses on the subjective experiences of participants, allowing their social world to be understood from their perspective (Liamputtong, 2010). Within this view, qualitative research participants are experts on the topic under study and provide insights into phenomena, particularly phenomena that is under researched (Liamputtong, 2010). Similarly, the case study approach or methodology "is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real life' context" (Simon, 2009, p. 21). In the case of this research, I will use qualitative case study research to understand the perspectives of student affairs practitioners at an institution, Ashesi University.

Qualitative case study research is conducted using some combination of three collection methods: observations, interviews, and/or document review (Simon, 2009). For this research, I am proposing all three methods in order to understand the perspectives of student affairs practitioners at Ashesi University. In addition to interviews with student affairs practitioners, the additional data collection methods of observation and document review help to provide a comprehensive answer to the research questions being studied. This research approach will be best supported through permission of access from Ashesi University.

Ashesi University Site Access Request

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this research study is to understand the experiences of student affairs practitioners at Ashesi University. I am requesting to use Ashesi University as the site for this research. Specifically, I intend to address the following research questions using the associated methods below:

- Research question #1 and 2: How do the OSCA staff conceptualize student affairs practice at Ashesi University? How do the OSCA staff enact student affairs practice at Ashesi University?
    - Method: Two 60 minute interviews with staff in the Office of Student and Community Affairs, observations of practice by staff indicated above, and document/artifact review provided by the staff indicated above that represent their practice
- Research question #2: How do other constituents (e.g. faculty, students, administrators, alumni) describe the role of OSCA staff at Ashesi University?
    - Method: 60-minute individual and/or group interviews with faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni outside of the Office of Student and Community Affairs

In Fall 2016, I propose travelling to Ghana and spending four to six weeks at Ashesi to gather data as outlined above. The initial interview with each participant would be used to gather information about their cultural and career background, their specific job responsibilities, and their perspective on student affairs practice. For this interview, I would also ask participants to bring an artifact and/or document that represents student affairs practice to frame their conceptualization of student affairs practice. Finally, we would brainstorm opportunities for the observation portion of the study. After the initial interview, I will serve as a non-participant observer of the participants engaged in student affairs practice as discussed in the initial interview. After completing the observations, I would participate in a second interview with participants discussing the observations and collect any additional documents and/or artifacts to review. Each of the interviews will last no longer than 60 minutes. The length of the observations will vary based on the type of activity. In order to complete this research, I would like to request:

- Permission to use Ashesi University as a research site
- An introductory meeting with staff of the Office of Student and Community Affairs staff to explain the research and request voluntary participation.
- Assistance with scheduling a meeting with the President of Ashesi University or his designee to inquire about the role student affairs at Ashesi University

- Assistance with scheduling individual or group meetings with students to inquire about the role of student affairs in their learning experience at Ashesi
- Assistance with scheduling individual or group meetings with faculty and/or administrators outside of the Office of Student and Community Affairs about the role of student affairs in the mission and vision of the university
- Letter of support for the Institutional Review Board at the University of Georgia outlining the support of the research, use of Ashesi as a research site, and the parameters of the research
- Communication with Dean Kwakwa or her designee for all research activities including any adjustments needed for the data collection process

Researcher Background

I am a doctoral candidate in the College Student Affairs Administration program at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA, U.S.A. Prior to my time as a doctoral student, I worked as a student affairs practitioner for five years in the functional areas of student activities, diversity and multicultural programming, residence life, and assessment and evaluation. My research, as a doctoral student, has focused on the experiences of new student affairs practitioners, their socialization, and their use of theory in their practice. For my dissertation research, I wanted to focus on the experiences of nontraditional student affairs practitioners, those without formal student affairs training, and their perspectives on student affairs and socialization into the field.

In preparing for a study abroad experience in Ghana this past December and researching the work of student affairs practitioners in Ghana and Africa, I was consistently directed to Ashesi University. My visit to Ashesi in December was the highlight of my time in Ghana! Speaking with Dean Ruth Kwakwa and Rosemary Kotei, touring the campus, and speaking with current students confirmed Ashesi's holistic focus on students and commitment to improving Ghana and Africa. As higher education and student affairs evolves to meet the demands of students globally, Ashesi's model is a powerful testament to the need to create a student-centered campus that engages its students to critically think and solve the complex problems of the world.

As such, I would like to propose using Ashesi University as the site for my dissertation research, which is the final requirement in the completion of the doctoral degree. This past spring, I was awarded the Ira Aaron International Study Abroad scholarship from the College of Education at the University of Georgia that I will use to fund this research. In addition to providing the staff with the findings from the study to be completed in Spring 2017, I also would like to offer a workshop, during my time in Ghana, on student affairs practice to the staff tailored to the needs of Ashesi University.

Conclusion

Ashesi is a model for higher education: its students and alumni are successful and the entire campus collaborates in support of their students. This study has the potential for better informing student affairs practitioners domestically and abroad of the importance of mission based practices and outcomes in the context of a private Ghanaian liberal arts institution. Furthermore, this study will inform how student affairs practice, traditionally considered an American invention, can be culturally informed (Zereik & Seeto, 2014, p. 25) and provide a model for the continued global expansion of higher education. The work of student affairs practitioners in fulfilling this mission can also serve as an international model for culturally

competent student affairs practice. I would welcome the opportunity to work with the Office of Student and Community Affairs staff in this effort.

Appendix C
Participant Recruitment Scripts

Participant Recruitment Script -- OSCA Staff

Greetings! My name is Jillian Martin and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia. I am conducting a research project on student affairs practice at Ashesi University. I am recruiting participants for this study who:

- Are currently employed full-time as a staff member in the Office of Community and Student Affairs

Participants who choose to be part of the study will be asked to:

- Participate in two 60-minute audio-recorded interviews to talk about your background and experiences as an OSCA staff member at Ashesi University
- At the initial and subsequent interview, bring a document and/or artifact that describes your work as an OSCA staff meeting
- Collaborate with the researcher to identify opportunities for observing OSCA staff work and permit the researcher to engage in the observation
- Review interview transcripts and study findings to ensure accuracy of statements and clarity of findings

Participants will choose a pseudonym for confidentiality and are able to withdraw from participation at any time. For participating, the researcher, Jillian Martin, will facilitate a workshop on student affairs practice based on the needs of the OSCA staff.
If you are interested in participating or have questions about this study, please contact me directly at the email address below.
Thank you for your time and consideration to this request.

Sincerely,
Jillian A. Martin
oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com

Participant Recruitment Script – non-OSCA administrators, faculty, students

Greetings! My name is Jillian Martin and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia. I am conducting a research project on student affairs practice at Ashesi University. I am recruiting participants for this study who:

- Are a current student, alumnae, administrator, or faculty member at Ashesi University

Participants who choose to be part of the study will be asked to:

- Participate an interview for no more than one hour to discuss your experiences with and perceptions of the OSCA staff
- Review interview transcripts and study findings to ensure accuracy of statements and clarity of findings

Participants will choose a pseudonym for confidentiality and are able to withdraw from participation at any time.
If you are interested in participating or have questions about this study, please contact me directly at the email address below.
Thank you for your time and consideration to this request.

Sincerely,
Jillian A. Martin
oscaresearchstudy@gmail.com

Appendix D
Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol -- OSCA Staff

Introduction and background
I am very interested in how you came to work at Ashesi, could you tell me about your path to Ashesi?

- Ensure you gather:
    - Length of time working at Ashesi
    - Career/work prior to Ashesi
    - Country/regional/city origin
    - Education and training background (university, certifications)

OSCA Staff Role
What do you do here at Ashesi?

- Ensure you inquire about if they are the first to hold this role or if they succeeded someone.
    - If succeeded: were they given a transition report of some kind to guide them?
    - If first: what was one or two first things they did in their position?
- Ask about how they learned how to do their work; what was the biggest socialization tool for them?

How would you describe a typical day (or week) for your role at Ashesi?

What is the most challenging part of your role? Of working at Ashesi?

What is your favorite part of your role? Of working at Ashesi?

What scholarship, if any, do you draw on to do your work?

How does the document you brought with you describe your role?

When you hear student and community affairs, what do you think of?

Could you describe your interactions with other OSCA staff? Students? Faculty? Non-OSCA administrators? Alumni?

As part of the benefits of this study, I will facilitate a workshop on student affairs practice with the OSCA staff. What topics would you be interested in me exploring?

Observation planning
A large part of this research is observing you in your role so that I can understand what you described today looks like in practice. I will not be evaluating you at all during the observation, but will be looking at how you actualize your practice. What are some possible opportunities for me to observe you in practice in the coming weeks?

- Be sure to discuss specific days, times, and locations for observation where no confidential student or university information will be shared
- Be sure to inform them that they will be able to review the observation narratives for accuracy of information

Interview Conclusion

Thank you for your time today. It has been a pleasure to get to know more about you and your work here at Ashesi University. Following the observations, we discussed today, we will meet again and discuss the observations. During that time, I will ask questions about the observations to hear from your perspective what was happening and to clarify my understandings of the happenings. Prior to that interview, I will provide you with observation narratives for us to review during the interview session. If you think of anything between now and the observations or the interview, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you would like to bring any additional documents and/or artifacts to the next interview regarding your conceptualization of your work, please do so and we can discuss it at that time. Is there anything you need clarification on regarding this process? Are there any questions you wished I would have asked you but didn't? Conclude the interview.

Interview Protocol – non-OSCA administrators, faculty, students, and alumni

Introduction and background

I am very interested in how you came to Ashesi; could you tell me about your path to Ashesi?

- Ensure you gather:
  - Length of time at Ashesi
  - Career/work prior to Ashesi
  - Country/regional/city origin
  - Major/career interests
  - Education and training background (university, certifications)
  - For alumni, what did you do following your time at Ashesi? What are you doing now?

Perceptions of OSCA Staff

How would you describe your interactions with the OSCA staff?

- Be sure to gather information about the nature of their interactions with OSCA staff; did they work with them on a program, work with them on a student issue/referral
- Also, inquire about how often they interact/interacted with staff

How would describe OSCA staff's role on campus?

If you could, take a moment to imagine Ashesi without the OSCA staff here, what do you think would be most impacted?

When you hear student and community affairs, what do you think of?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about Ashesi University and/or the OSCA staff that you were not asked about?

Interview Conclusion

Thank your time and attention during this interview. Your responses will be used to get a full picture of the role of OSCA staff here at Ashesi University. After this interview is transcribed, I will send you a copy to review and provide feedback to ensure that it accurately represents what we discussed today. If you have any comments on the transcript or additional comments regarding this interview, you can contact me at the email address provided or we can have another conversation. Thank you again for your time and attention.

Appendix E
Observation Protocol

Date:

Time Begin:

Time End:

OSCA staff pseudonym:

Location:

Number of people present:
Seated #:
Standing#:
Who is present?:

Type of observation:

Room/location layout (draw):

What is the main role of the OSCA staff member?

Where do you see elements of the interview in this observation?

How does OSCA staff member interact with students present?

How do student interact with OSCA staff member?

Other observations: