

Partnerships Between JMU and African Countries Committee

Ghana Subcommittee

Spring 2024 Report

Membership

Chair(s): David Owusu-Ansah & Bayo Ogundipe

Members: Katie Sensabaugh (CGE), Ryan Corriston (CVPA), Linda Thomas (Graduate Dean); Melinda Adams (CAL Assoc dean), Andrea Knopp (Grad director at Nursing School & CHBS), Delores Phillips (AAAD Director), (consulted with JY Zhou Exec Director of CGE)

Charge: This committee is charged to review the historic JMU Ghana Summer Abroad program and make recommendations for its enhancement in the context of exploring new advantages and opportunities.

The JMU Ghana Abroad program, the first educational experience for our students on the continent of Africa, started in 1997. In partnership with the Language Center at the University of Ghana (UG), we have conducted our summer academic engagements and internships each year, except the two years of COVID-19. Through its Institute of African Studies (IAS), the University of Ghana also serves as an international hub for researchers and scholars since 1963. Over the years, respective directors of the Language Center at the university organized our students' presentations by UG faculty. Other program activities that are not directly associated with the university (such as internships and volunteer sites) are integral components of the Ghana summer experience.

Because of the Ghana summer program, new opportunities and calls for partnership(s) are opening to us. The need to re-evaluate our opportunities in Ghana is consistent with our institutional goals and objectives in the context of becoming the national model of an engaged university. In this framework, we can explore opportunities for further internationalization, faculty research, and collaborations, recruitment of students and student exchanges—not to mention enhancing our inclusive excellence commitments.

Summary of Current Semester Activity:

- Starting with the date of charge, the full committee met on 13 December at which JY Zhou (Executive Director for CGE) joined us to discuss the MoU process and the role CGE will play. JY's visit was suggested from a separate meeting that I (David Owusu-Ansah) had with the provost to give her a private update.
- At the 13 December meeting, language for the MoU with the University of Ghana and the University of Health and Allied Studies at Ho, Ghana (UHAS) was discussed.
- We also discussed the central core of the provost's charge to the committee.
- All activities leading to the 13 December meeting and agenda were the results of prior subcommittee meetings in which Bayo Ogundipe and Andrea Knopp joined me (David Owusu-Ansah) to initiate. 1) zoom meeting with Vice Chancellor of Ho. 2) we also planned for David Owusu-Ansah to initiate conversations with Assistant Registrar for

International Programs at the University of Ghana (UG). Future conversations with the Director of the internationally respected Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana were also envisioned.

- Provost Coltman encouraged the Ghana Committee to consider submitting a Ghana Big Idea Proposal. We submitted the proposal by the 1 March 2024 deadline.
- The committee engaged in the process of finalizing the language of the MoU with Ho and UG. The contents of the MoUs were discussed at the January 2024 committee meeting.
- The MoUs with Ho and UG were circulated with the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Legal Counsel in February.
- MoU with UHAS was finally signed by all Parties on 12 February 2024.
- Provost to be in Ghana in June 2024 for familiarization with our partners.
- At various stages of our conversations, we have reached out to the Office of the University Counsel to seek directives and clarifications that will ensure that the contents of the MoUs are consistent with JMU vision and mission.
- The MoU with the University of Ghana was signed by all Parties on 25 April 2024.

Future Work Planned:

- JMU's MoU with the Garden City University College, Kumasi Ghana for Nursing and Midwifery was signed in fall 2023. JMU Nursing followed up with a Winter Session 2024 Nursing Abroad travel to Ghana in January. This program will be repeated in January 2025.
- MoU with University of Health and Allied Studies (UHAS) at Ho Ghana was signed 12 February 2024. Provost plans a June 2024 visit to Ho, Ghana.
- The Ghana project awaits the presidential committee evaluation of the Big Idea proposal.
- MoU with the University of Ghana was signed by the Office of the Provost and the Executive Director of the Center for Global Engagement on 18 April 2024. The University of Ghana signed the MoU on 25 April 2024.
- Provost Heather Coltman had a conversation with Andrea Knopp to evaluate what could be the scope of Nursing engagements with UHAS. Andrea Knopp also updated Heather Coltman on Nursing engagement with the Garden City University College for Nursing (GCUC). Again, JMU Nursing School plans a January 2025 Winter Session at GCUC in Ghana.
- Heather Coltman will be in Ghana, 14-29 June 2024, to visit our international academic partners to determine the scope of our future engagements.
- In conversation with the Office of the Provost, the co-chairs of the Ghana initiative (with accounting support and assessment from Tamara Hatch from Sponsored Programs), have requested \$40,000.00 annual budget through CGE to support cover program and administrative charges to sustain the various Ghana programs for the duration of the initial MoUs. We look forward to the official approval of the budget request.