

Ashesi University

Groundbreaking - Phase One Campus Construction

Berekuso, Ghana

August 29, 2009

Your Excellency, US Ambassador to Ghana, Honorable Minister of Education, Nana Oteng Korankye II, Nananom, Distinguished guests, members of the Ashesi Community, in this, our eight year of instruction at Ashesi University, I feel very privileged to welcome you to the groundbreaking ceremony for our permanent campus home.

Nana Oteng Korankye II, Elders and Citizens of Berekuso, thank you so much for the warm welcome you have afforded Ashesi University. We look forward to a lifetime of partnership with you.

We have come a long way since we began instruction at Ashesi on March 4th, 2002 with 30 students. We started small, but with a very big idea -- to nurture a new generation of ethical entrepreneurial leaders in Africa. We started with a small step, but also with a quiet and unshakable resolve. We started small, but with great hope for Africa's future and our part in it.

The planting of shovels in the earth this morning marks a historic event for our institution. It will be recorded in stone, on a plaque that we will unveil today and mount on our first building when it is completed. Yet, this event is also just another small step in a long journey. We take this step with humility, and with great joy about yet another new beginning for our institution.

On this site, and on this day, we strengthen our commitment to building an institution that nurtures Africa's future leaders. These glorious 100 acres afford us much needed room to more fully pursue Ashesi's vision. This will be the site of many more beginning as we grow and develop purpose-built spaces such as science and engineering labs, performing arts studios and sports fields.

The campus we begin building today at this beautiful site, will echo the traditions of our forbearers. Yet, it will also be sensitive to the demands of our time as we implement an ecologically friendly campus. Collaboration and exploration will be enabled by classrooms that foster discussion, work and living spaces that embed digital communication technology, and external spaces that invite us to pause and to gather. The campus that we build here will provide a setting that deepens our spirit of community and responsibility.

I would like to thank all members of the Ashesi community –students, faculty, administrators, alumni, and board members– who have worked so hard to nurture the light that shines here at Ashesi. I thank all our donors and volunteers whose generous gifts of time and financial resources have made this day possible. And I thank the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank for investing in Ashesi's vision.

Thank you all, and God bless.