YALI fellows engage with local entrepreneurs and organizations

By Matthew Pietrus

The 25 young African fellows who came to Northwestern this summer through President Obama’s Young African Leaders Initiative took part in an intensive six-week program from mid-June to the end of July: three days a week of classes and, on the remaining days, site visits, community service, and cultural activities.

YALI’s flagship fellowship program—now named the Mandela Washington Fellowship—is offered by the Department of State with its implementing partner, the International Research and Exchanges Board. YALI was created in response to requests by young African leaders for practical skill-building and leadership training. In 2014 it brought 500 of sub-Saharan Africa’s most innovative young people to 20 universities in the United States.

PAS, the Farley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and the Center for Leadership organized a six-week Business and Entrepreneurship Institute for Northwestern’s 25 fellows. They received executive-level business training and hands-on experience with US organizations.

The fellows came to Northwestern with strong entrepreneurial backgrounds and acquired more ideas and skills to promote their original enterprises or establish new ones. In the classes that they took three days a week with faculty of the Farley Center and the Center for Leadership, they analyzed entrepreneurship and

Esmeralda Kale named Herskovits Library curator

Esmeralda Kale became George and Mary LeCron Foster Curator of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies in July, succeeding David Easterbrook. Well known to the Northwestern University Library and PAS communities, Kale has been the bibliographer of Africana since joining the Herskovits Library in 2003.

Kale, the principal investigator of the Council on Library and Information Resources grant to catalog “Africana Posters: Hidden Collections of Northwestern and Michigan State University Libraries” (2009), secured two acquisitions grants from the Illinois Cooperative Collection Management Program. She has curated many exhibitions in University Library, including the “Africana Celebrates the World Cup” exhibit in 2010 and the current “Apartheid to Democracy” exhibit and accompanying film series.
leadership. The site visits showcased successful businesses around Chicago and helped build the fellows’ networks. They visited Google, IBM, WBEZ, Crain’s Chicago Business, and the digital start-up hub 1871. They also met US Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky and State Senator Daniel Biss to talk about American politics and navigating the political sphere.

The community service events served two functions: to encourage the fellows to continue the spirit of service and philanthropy in their communities and to expose them to underserved areas of Chicago. Fellows worked with organizations such as the Chicago Urban League and the Chicago Gospel Run on the South Side, the Carole Robinson Center for Learning on the West Side, and the Inspiration Corporation, Refugee One, the Pan-African Association, and the Youth Organization Umbrella on the North Side.

The cultural component included a visit to the Art Institute of Chicago, an architectural boat tour, Fourth of July festivities (where some met Illinois Governor Patrick Quinn), and a tour of Goose Island Brewery.

At the end of their six weeks on campus, the fellows headed to Washington, DC, for the Presidential Summit, where they were addressed by President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power, and Secretary of State John Kerry. President Obama urged the fellows to work for systematic changes toward better governance, gender equality, economic reform, and conflict resolution and called upon them to continue the growing influence of African nations in the global arena. Michelle Obama stressed that “no matter where you all work, women’s equality must be a central part.”

The following descriptions of the work of eight of Northwestern’s 25 fellows demonstrate their positive impact on their communities:

Addressing the need for youth capacity building in Nigeria, Lawrence Afere founded and operates Springboard Farms, which is dedicated to agricultural training of unemployed youth. With the skills he gained at Northwestern, Afere plans to expand his project to acquire more land, train more youth, and generate revenue for these projects through the production and sale of plantain chips.

Amina Oshiokpekhai of Nigeria heads a pastry shop that trains young women in the culinary arts. Despite her own success as a self-taught baker, Oshiokpekhai realized that to better train and change her community, she must continue learning, adapting, and innovating. Oshiokpekhai used her time at Northwestern to meet entrepreneurs, clinical professors, and experts at Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts as she prepared to expand the impact of her pastry shop.

Ethiopian Yonas Getachew, a hospitality consultant, has brought global leaders in hospitality to Addis Ababa. Ethiopia has attracted hotel giants such as Hilton and Marriott but is losing people to more lucrative positions in the Middle East. Getachew would like to counteract this loss of human capital by developing a hospitality school. He studied entrepreneurship concepts and met with representatives of hospitality schools in Chicago when he was here.

Zimbabwean Tafadzwa Nyamuzihwa became blind in his early 20s and realized how debilitating visual impairment is. He created Shine On International, an organization to empower and motivate the blind. He also uses his radio show, which reaches 3 million people across the country, to advocate for the visually impaired. At every meeting in Evanston and Chicago, he emphasized the need to embrace the visually impaired community when making business decisions.
Tatiana Pereira of Mozambique is a founder and managing partner of IdeiaLab, an entrepreneurial consultancy that advises young businesspeople, many of whom are women, on business start-ups. She hopes efforts such as hers can be replicated in other African countries. While in the program on campus, Pereira shared her knowledge with young Evanston entrepreneurs from the Youth Organization Umbrella during a mentorship dinner.

Credit analyst Patricia Tahirindray works in capacity building and leadership training with the Catholic Girl Scouts of Madagascar. At the summit in Washington, DC, Tahirindray was recognized by Michelle Obama as a leader in girls’ advocacy and advancement.

In Uganda, Anne Kabahuma is the operations manager at the Rwenzori Sustainable Trade Center, a collective that organizes women to produce handcraft exports for retailers such as US-based Home Goods. Her work empowers women to counter Uganda’s strong patriarchal values.

After learning that a lender was taking advantage of women doing business in a Yaounde, Cameroon, marketplace by charging about 300 percent monthly interest, Roland Bongko quit his job and founded a microfinance company that has provided affordable interest rates to more than 1,100 women.

Each fellow’s story is inspiring. As they continue working as journalists, businesspeople, and entrepreneurs, the fellows will help to advance gender equality, better governance, and socioeconomic reform in their own countries. Closing his remarks at the summit, President Obama said, “Africa has troubles, the world has troubles . . . but you are not bound by the past. You can shape the future.”

Northwestern and PAS were honored to host the fellows and learn about their experiences and dreams. Our students and faculty anticipate further engagement with many of them here and in Africa in the years to come.

For more information about YALI, please visit www.northwestern.edu/african-studies/yali-washington-fellows/index.html or email Matthew Pietrus, PAS program coordinator for the Mandela Washington Fellowship, at matthew.pietrus@northwestern.edu.

AFRICAN BUSINESS CLIMATES THE FOCUS OF CONFERENCE

By David Peyton and Sakhile Matlhare

“Africa is not Africa” was a central point of the keynote speaker at the fifth Africa Business Conference of the Kellogg School of Management’s Africa Business Club in April. Thomas Konditi, financial officer for GE Africa, disputed the conception that there is a homogenous social and business climate in Africa’s 55 countries.

“Morocco is as different from Malawi as South Africa is from the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” Konditi said. Individual African economies have distinct geo-strategic advantages that create specific types of business environments. Morocco, for example, has reformed its regulatory environment to ensure predictable exchanges and reliable contract enforcement. Its Casablanca Finance City, ideally situated to act as an economic and financial hub, is attracting international institutions and investors to choose Casablanca as a gateway for their operations in north, west, and central Africa.

Other speakers agreed with Konditi’s conclusion that African economies are on the move, as entrepreneurs ride a wave of economic growth. Some highlighted innovations taking place in African markets. Bright Simmons, Ghanaian innovator and president of mPedigree Network, discussed his business venture that allows African consumers to check instantly whether their medicines are counterfeit. Africa is well positioned for such innovations to proliferate, as 10 of the world’s fastest-growing economies are located on the continent.

Along with the practicalities and challenges of doing business, key considerations of the conference included African entrepreneurship and African-Chinese relations. Other speakers discussed how the combination of technology and business innovation has not only improved bottom lines but also yielded important social returns.

The conference theme, “Navigating Africa: A Practical Guide to Doing Business on the Continent,” echoed the 2014 World Economic Forum’s focus on Africa’s economic growth, social development, and policy formation. During that forum, held in Nigeria, Albert Kobina Essien, group chief executive officer of Ecobank Transnational, observed, “Africa has been rising for a long time. I hope we will eventually get to a point where we have risen.”
Gabeeba Baderoon, author of Regarding Muslims: From Slavery to Postapartheid and assistant professor of women’s studies and African studies at Pennsylvania State University, will speak at PAS at 4 p.m. November 3 on “Religion and Race, Religion as Race: The Place of Muslims in South Africa.”

In Regarding Muslims (Wits University Press, 2014), Baderoon argues that the 350-year presence of Muslims in South Africa is crucial to understanding the formation of concepts of race, sexuality, and belonging in the country. Recent-day South Africa is infamous for apartheid, but the country’s problems of war, genocide, and systemic sexual violence have a foundation in earlier history: 176 years of slavery, from 1658 to 1834. Enslaved people from East Africa, India, and Southeast Asia, many of whom were Muslim, eventually constituted the majority of the population of the Cape Colony, the first of the colonial territories to form South Africa. Illustrating the complex relation of religion to race in South Africa that began in the colonial period, attempts were made in the mid-20th century to create a Muslim “race.”

Baderoon, who is also a published poet with a PhD in English from the University of Cape Town, will appear at the Chicago Humanities Festival during her time in the Chicago area, reading from her poetry on November 2. She is author of the collections The Dream in the Next Body (Kwela Books, 2005) and A Hundred Silences (Kwela Books, 2006). She received the 2005 DaimlerChrysler Award for South African poetry.

ISITA WELCOMES FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

This fall ISITA is hosting Fulbright African research scholar Ibrahim Haruna Hassan, a senior lecturer in religious studies at the University of Jos, Nigeria. At Northwestern, Hassan will pursue a new research project titled “Orientalism and Islamism: A Comparative Study of Approaches to Islamic Studies.”

Hassan is interested in the interaction between non-Muslim western writings about Islam (Orientalism) and Muslims’ radical interpretations of Islam (Islamism) and how these discourses have been shaped through reaction to the perceived “other.” Given that Edward Said’s 1977 work Orientalism continues to be a central text in Islamic studies at many Nigerian universities, Hassan aims to challenge students’ stereotypes about western scholarship on Muslims by demonstrating how it has evolved since publication of Said’s book. At the same time, his project will offer a nuanced view of the range of Islamic thought in the Muslim world.

“Said suggests that not all academic discourse in the west has to be Orientalist, and I suggest that not all Muslim discourse in the Muslim world is Islamist,” says Hassan, adding that only by “reading beyond” Orientalism and Islamism can there be dialogue between these two globally important schools of thought.

Hassan received his PhD in Islamic studies from Bayero University (Kano) in 2008 with a thesis focusing on Islamic theories of development. He has written on Islam in Nigeria and the writings of the Fodio family, founders of the Sokoto state and the Fulani empire in what is today northern Nigeria.
GLOBAL HEALTH COLLABORATIONS WIN SUPPORT

Northwestern’s Office for Research has provided seed funds for joint activities by the Program of African Studies, the International Program Development/Global Health Studies Program, and the Center for Global Health that foster cross-campus collaboration among Northwestern faculty working in global health.

PAS, IPD/GHS, and CGH will coordinate an array of activities in 2014–15 focusing on HIV/AIDS in the fall and on nutrition and global health technologies (tentatively) in winter and spring.

Faculty presenters from the Evanston campus—home to PAS and IPD/GHS—will be featured in Institute for Public Health and Medicine seminars, a series of large public lectures on the Chicago campus coordinated by the Center for Health Education at Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine.

In addition, a panel comprising equal numbers of Evanston and Chicago campus faculty will convene to share research findings and discuss collaborative opportunities.

For more information about these activities, please contact PAS associate director Kate Klein at kate-klein@northwestern.edu.

Africana librarian Patricia Ogedengbe retires

Patricia Ukoli Ogedengbe has retired as librarian of Africana after 26 years of service at the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies.

One of the highlights of Ogedengbe’s career at Northwestern was winning a Fulbright award in 2007–08 to collect public awareness materials on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. She visited 20 of Nigeria’s 36 states, collecting posters, T-shirts, publications, CDs, DVDs, and other official and community health awareness project objects, even a dust pan. An exhibit she curated, “It’s No Longer News to Us: HIV/AIDS Educational Materials from Nigeria,” highlighted some of the materials she collected. It ran in University Library from December 2008 to February 2009. Ogedengbe said at the opening, “The reality behind these materials is, we live with it, we know what it is, here’s how we combat it on a daily basis.”

Ogedengbe curated a number of other exhibits, including “Remembering Hans E. Panoftsky, Curator of Africana” and “Miriam Makeba: South African Singer and Civil Rights Activist,” both on display in the Herskovits Library in 2013.

The Black Graduate Student Association last spring awarded Ogedengbe the Penny Warren Honorary Service Award for her dedication to members’ interests, noting especially her warm informal relationships with many of them. Her welcoming manner also made PAS’s many visiting scholars from Africa feel at home. Besides introducing them to the Africana collection, she helped ease their transition to American life, offering hospitality and often home-cooked meals. Ogedengbe was also an ambassador of African fashion, frequently wearing modern or traditional African outfits.

Ogedengbe received a BA in French from Luther College (Decorah, Iowa), a master of library science from Simmons College (Boston), and a doctorate in education media and technology from Boston University. She worked at Boston University in the 1970s, first in the African Studies Library and then as director of the Educational Resources Library. In 1983 she returned to her homeland, Nigeria, where she served in the University of Jos Library until 1987, when she came to Northwestern.

Kale, continued from front page

Kale holds a bachelor’s degree from Trent University (Ottawa) and an MA and graduate diploma in library and information science from Concordia University. She further studied at University College, London, in 1989–90.

She was assistant librarian and head of periodicals, gifts, and exchange at the University of Swaziland from 1990 to 1995; systems librarian at Rhodes University in 1995–96; acting head of the University of Fort Hare’s library and information science department from 1997 to 1999; assistant systems librarian at Tri-College Consortium (Bryn Mawr, Haverford, Swarthmore) in 1999–2000; and reference librarian at Zayed University (Abu Dhabi) from 2000 to 2003.
Graduate students Kofi Asante (sociology), Moses Khisa (political science), and Marlous van Waijenburg (history) received summer research grants to pursue their African research projects from the Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies’ Equality Development and Globalization Studies Program.

Marcos Leitão de Almeida won the history department’s George Romani Prize for the best first-year graduate student paper for “The Language of Slavery among Kongo-Yaka Speakers: Vulnerability, Exclusion, and Enslavement in the Lower Congo Region (Early Times to c. 1665).”

Kathryn DeLuna (history PhD alumna) was appointed assistant professor of history at Georgetown University in 2013.

Jonathon P. Glassman (history) has been named a fellow of the National Humanities Center for 2014–15 for his project “A History of Barbarism: Difference and Race in African Thought.” He has also recently published an article, “Creole Nationalists and the Search for Nativist Authenticity in 20th-Century Zanzibar: The Limits of Cosmopolitanism,” in the Journal of African History.

Kate Klein (associate director, PAS) received an MA/MPH degree in 2014 and will spend the 2014–15 academic year at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta as a recipient of the ASPPH/CDC Allan Rosenfield Global Health Fellowship. Her projects will involve working with the health ministries of nine countries in Africa, Asia, and South and Central America to establish national institutes of public health. She will continue to serve as PAS associate director.

Robert Launay (anthropology) gave a lecture titled “Writing Boards and Blackboards: Islamic Education in Africa” in June at the University of Urbino (Italy) and the Zentrum Moderner Orient (Berlin).

Andrea Felber Seligman (2014 history PhD alumna) joined Allegheny College as a visiting assistant professor of African history.

Nicholas Smith (history graduate student) has won a 2014–15 Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship to research the history of Somali pirates.

Alexander Thurston (religious studies PhD alumnus) has been appointed visiting assistant professor of African studies at Georgetown University.

Marlous van Waijenburg (graduate student, history) won a dissertation fellowship from the Economic History Association. In addition, her article “Metropolitan Blueprints of Colonial Taxation? Lessons from Fiscal Capacity Building in British and French Africa, c. 1880–1940,” cowritten with Ewout Frankema, will be published in the Journal of African History this fall.

PAS congratulates the following six students who successfully defended their doctoral dissertations in spring:

Lauren Nicole Adrover (anthropology), “Festival Encounters: Value Logics and the Political Economy of Cultural Production in Ghana.”

Historian of West Africa joins history department

Sean Hanretta, a specialist in West African history, particularly its intellectual history, joins Northwestern this fall as an associate professor. Hanretta focuses especially on Islam and African religions in francophone West Africa and Ghana.

He has published widely, including studies of Sufism, Muslim identity in Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire, West African intellectuals and politicians, women’s power in the 19th-century Zulu state, historical theory, the African diaspora, and slavery. His book Islam and Social Change in French West Africa: History of an Emancipatory Community (Cambridge University Press, 2009) investigates the history and religious community of Muslim Sufi mystics from socially marginal backgrounds in colonial French West Africa. He is also the coeditor of Ghana Studies.


Hanretta received a PhD in history from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 2003 and has taught at Stanford University since 2004. He was director of Stanford’s Center for African Studies in 2013–14. He held visiting professor positions at Dartmouth College in 2004 and the University of Florida in 2010–11. His awards include a 1995–96 Mellon Fellowship, a 2000–01 Fulbright Fellowship, and 1998–99 and 2000–01 Social Science Research Council Fellowships.


More than two dozen award-winning students were recognized at the annual PAS picnic in June. They included Panofsky Award recipients, who traveled to Africa for predissertation research last summer; Goodman Award recipients, who will be undertaking intensive study of African languages in the next year; and African Leadership Research winners, who will receive grants for developing undergraduate research projects relating to African studies.

Hans E. Panofsky Predissertation Research Awardees
Priscilla Adipa
Kofi Asante
Marco Bochesse
Magda Boutrose
Moses Khisa
Sakhile Matlhare
Christopher Muhoozi
Jessica Pouchet
Amy Selby

Morris Goodman Awardees
Kofi Asante
Matthew Brauer
William Fitzsimmons
Bernard Forjwour
Claudia Garcia-Rojas
Aditi Malik
Sakhile Matlhare
Christopher Muhoozi
Jessica Pouchet
Nafissatou Sall
Amy Selby
Amy Swanson

African Leadership Research Awardees
Nedra Lucas
Madeline May and Jaclyn Skurie
Kenny Mok
Neha Guddeti Reddy and Matt Zhou

Send your news updates to african-studies@northwestern.edu so that PAS can share word with the Africanist community at Northwestern and beyond.
Events calendar

Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at PAS, 620 Library Place, Evanston.

OCTOBER

1  noon–1:15 p.m.
   “Ebola, Health, and Human Rights,”
   Terry McDonnell (sociology, University of Notre Dame). Cosponsored by PAS and Northwestern University School of Law. Rubloff 140, 375 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago.

13  4 p.m.
   “A Historical Approach to the Archaeology of Tanzania’s Ancient Hinterland,” Jonathan F. Walz (anthropology, Rollins College).

21  noon
   “Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Charles Taylor Trial,” Shireen Avis Fisher (president of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and 2014 recipient of Northwestern University School of Law’s Center for International Human Rights Jurist of the Year Award).

23  noon

24  noon (lunch provided)
   Presentation by Noelle Sullivan (anthropology and global health studies). Cosponsored by PAS and BCICS. 1902 Sheridan Road, Evanston.

NOVEMBER

3  4 p.m.

6  6:30 p.m.

10  4 p.m.

12  12:30 p.m.

13  6 p.m.

17  4 p.m.

19  4 p.m.
   “Informers, Intelligence Recruitment, and Apartheid Counterinsurgency,” Daniel Douek (political science, Concordia University).

DECEMBER

4  6:5
   “Globalizing Race Studies” workshop.