



AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER

Enhancing the interdisciplinary and collaborative study of Africa, past and present

The University of Michigan's African Studies Center (ASC) is one of the nation's foremost institutes for interdisciplinary, collaborative research and training on, in, and about Africa. ASC provides guidance and coordination for Africa-related education, research, and programming at the university and promotes collaboration with partners on the continent. ASC funds research sabbaticals that bring talented African faculty to campus through our flagship program—University of Michigan African Presidential Scholars (UMAPS)—which fosters cutting edge scholarship that delivers value to our students and faculty while also strengthening African universities. The next generation of African scholars build their international academic networks, are empowered to become research leaders in their fields, and work toward solving global challenges and contributing to the continent's growth and continued excellence.

The ASC is committed to building all of its engagements on the values of reciprocity, sustainable partnerships, co-creation of knowledge, and real-world applications. It is this commitment that makes ASC a valuable contributor to the efforts of African countries to build their own capacity and grow their own talent in ways that will help bring more education, health, well-being, economic growth, and development across the continent.

ASC supports initiatives in all disciplines and fields represented at U-M—from law and medicine to the sciences and humanities—for the mutual benefit of the university and our partners on the continent. We enable students and faculty to collaborate on research projects with colleagues at African partner institutions. UMAPS and other ASC initiatives enrich the experience of U-M's students and faculty through the inclusion of African perspectives on campus and ensure that the University of Michigan remains an unparalleled hub for African Studies.

Funding support provides more opportunities for U-M students to engage first-hand with the African continent through supervised research projects, internships, and specialized courses, and for talented faculty and students at African universities to pursue research sabbaticals and educational opportunities at U-M. Gifts help ensure that faculty based at both U-M and African institutions continue to develop and sustain equitable partnerships in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and professional fields. In order to find innovative solutions to shared global problems and formulate new research agendas, ASC leverages our strengths as a premier center for African studies to increase our impact both on campus and on the continent.

AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The University of Michigan African Presidential Scholars (UMAPS) Program, our cornerstone initiative, has been a highly successful, high-profile program at the University of Michigan since 2008. The program offers a one-semester residential fellowship at the U-M Ann Arbor campus, to scholars affiliated with an academic institution in the African continent. Scholars' appointment at the home institution must be as Ph.D. students or junior faculty. The average UMAPS cohort is 20 – 24 scholars per year.

Past UMAPS scholars have been very successful in their post-fellowship careers, securing appointments in high-profile government and academic roles, many others have launched into successful research careers and collaborations. All past scholars consider themselves U-M alumni, and their connections with our institution are most often long lasting. This aspect of the program has supported U-M's efforts in forging strong partnerships with African institutions, both in academia, government and enterprises.

The UMAPS program launched as a presidential initiative, supported by funds from then President Mary Sue Coleman. In recent years, it has received funding from a variety of sources, including presidential funds, funds from the vice provost responsible for international engagement, gifts from individual donors, other departments and colleges, grants, and from the Provost Advisory Committee. Several funding sources are set to expire and donor support will be critical to sustaining this unique and vital initiative. With an investment of \$15M endowed, donors can be recognized with the opportunity to name the program. Gifts of all sizes are most welcome and appreciated for the UMAPS endowment, which continues to grow a sustainable future for UMAPS.

We are also offering naming opportunities for individual scholar positions in the UMAPS program, which provides for one highly talented African faculty member to undertake a five-month residency at U-M. Endowed positions in the UMAPS program can be designated for fellows from specific universities or countries, or in specific disciplines, or they can be unrestricted. Funding is needed to cover the costs of the residency, including travel, housing, and a stipend. Endowed gifts of \$500,000 will be recognized with the opportunity to name an individual fellowship.

AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER ENDOWED FUND

An African Studies Center Endowed Fund will ensure the long-term sustainability of the African Studies Center at the University of Michigan by supporting its operations and scholarly output. Gifts to this fund contribute to the center's mission of advancing research, programming, and engagement with Africa. A generous gift of \$25,000 allows donors to name the fund, creating a perpetual revenue source that strengthens the center's impact. This endowed fund also serves as a foundation for future contributions, enabling ongoing support for faculty, students, and initiatives that deepen understanding of Africa's diverse cultures, histories, and contemporary issues.

STUDENT RESEARCH AND INTERNSHIP FELLOWSHIPS

Firsthand experience in Africa significantly enhances the education of our students as they become globally engaged citizens, preparing them for careers where regional expertise is needed. ASC welcomes endowed as well as expendable gifts to support merit-based fellowships for study abroad in all African countries. We also need supplemental funds to support African students who are studying at the University of Michigan. An endowed gift of \$1M, or \$50,000 annually, would provide \$5,000 of funding per student.

AFRICA-FOCUSED CURRICULUM

Students have greater opportunities to explore Africa-focused learning through content that is integrated into curricula across the university. ASC provides faculty grants to develop Africa-focused content in a range of courses. Students from all of U-M's schools and colleges benefit from the expanded engagement in Africa-related knowledge and perspectives as they move toward their future careers. Funds are needed to support up to three faculty per year as they bring content related to Africa into course offerings across campus. An endowed commitment of \$500,000 or \$25,000 annually would provide the requisite funding.

IMPACT

James Allen IV is the 2023 recipient of the Lester P. Monts Award for outstanding graduate student research on Africa. He completed his Ph.D. in public policy and economics at the University of Michigan, writing his dissertation entitled "Essays on Education and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa." His research examines multiple strategies for improving education and healthcare in low-income settings.

He investigated the effect of overlap in the school and farming calendars on children's schooling. Using a recent school calendar change in Malawi as an experiment, Allen found that overlap between the school and farm calendars significantly slows grade advancement. These findings suggest that accommodating farm labor demand should be a top priority in setting school calendars, and that overlap between school and farming calendars may indeed play an important role in explaining differences in schooling across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Prior to starting his Ph.D., he served in the Peace Corps in Mali; earned an MS degree in agricultural, food, and resource economics from Michigan State University; worked as a research director at the University of Kentucky; and has experience working in several developing countries, including Burundi, Mali, Mozambique, the Philippines, and Rwanda. In July 2023, he became an associate research fellow in the Poverty, Gender and Inclusion Unit at the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington, D.C.



AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER STRATEGIC FUND

The strategic fund is a vital resource to the ASC. When opportunities arise or budgeted funding falls short, the director uses these funds to move initiatives forward. Gifts of any size will support the center's greatest priorities, enhancing the study of Africa at U-M and beyond.



AFRICAN LANGUAGES PROGRAM

Language instruction is central to a meaningful and effective understanding of the countries and cultures of Africa. ASC supports the expansion of U-M's African language program by recruiting native speakers of African languages as instructors of courses for university students. Annual gifts of \$25,000, or \$500,000 endowed, are needed to support visiting African language faculty and will be used to cover expenses for one visiting language scholar annually.

WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your partnership connects the university's rich past to a boundless and bright future. You can change lives with gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities, and create a meaningful legacy through your bequest, trusts, gift annuities, and other planned gifts. Your generosity makes an impact on what's next, for a better tomorrow.

for what's next ►

Look to Michigan

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