

Alumni News

Class of 2008 joins the alumni family!

On Saturday, May 24, 2008, Ashesi University College hosted its fourth graduation ceremony. Ashesi's President, Patrick Awuah, praised the graduating Class of 2008 for the courage they exhibited in adopting an exam honour code, and he urged the newly minted graduates to remain daring in their quest for a more perfect world.

In a stirring speech, Class Speaker, Anida Acquah declared of her class, "Today, we are not faced with the fears of our inadequacy but fear of the power we possess to succeed and to stir up change."

Guest of honour, Mr. Kofi Bucknor urged Ashesi to continue its work to help re-invent Ghana's educational system in order to produce the kinds of leaders needed to transform Africa in an

increasingly interconnected world.

Prof. Nana Araba Apt, Ashesi's Dean of Academic Affairs, gave the opening reading, which was taken from her latest book, *Learning How to Play to Win*.

She read "We are in danger that our future leaders will become complacent and look to the western world for direction, while ignoring our home grown genius." Prof. Apt urged the graduating class to do their best to make Africa a better place.

The Class of 2008 will be remembered for their academic honesty, diversity and leadership potential. A member of the class was awarded a fellowship by TEDGlobal to attend its first ever TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design)



conference held in Africa in 2007.

David Darkwa, graduated top of his class with a Magna Cum Laude and Joseph Hinneh won the Torvinyo and IC Securities award for the best finance student.

We look forward to celebrating the successes of the Class of 2008!

Book Review: Richard Templar's *Rules of Work*

There is something inherently terrifying about the job market. Whether you are a newcomer taking your first tentative steps into the pool or a veteran of many years, the employment world is still tricky business and navigating it can be a

stressful exercise. The anxiety brought on by office politics, keeping up with appearances and the constant jostling for position and seniority...well, it can all be a bit much, sometimes. Enter Richard Templar's *The Rules of Work*.

It has been a while since I read something written in such a pragmatic manner. In ten brisk chapters, each one no more than thirty pages long, Templar gives us an insider's view of the working world. He strips away the simple veneer

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- Introducing the Kenyon Myers column.
- Review of Richard Templar's book, *The Rules of Work* by Eli Tetteh.
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Book Review : Richard Templar's *Rules of Work*

and lays bare the much more complicated machinery that makes management tick. Not only does he tell you what is going on – behind all the plastic grins and office camaraderie – he also lets you know how you can make it all work for you. And that is the ultimate aim, of course: no one joins an organization hoping to be slighted, ignored and passed over for promotions.

Unfortunately, however, this happens in far too many organizations simply because uninformed employees don't have the knowledge necessary to speed (or even start) their ascent up the ladder. In this sense then, *The Rules of Work* is both an

exposé and also a 'how-to' for those set on succeeding in the workplace.

Templar writes in a plain, unembellished style that is refreshing. Watching the author paint the corporate picture is like seeing an accomplished body shop mechanic strip away a vehicle's glistening exterior to reveal its messy innards.

What makes the book all the more credible is that Templar has actually been "there", and done all "that". His thirty-plus years of business experience allow him to drop gem after gem of real-world examples like that of the bright young worker who couldn't get a promo-

tion because he walked in every morning with his motorcycle helmet dangling in plain sight.

It is precisely this kind of eye for detail that enables Templar to notice which habits, personality traits and even mindsets can and, invariably, do transform subordinates into supervisors.

Should you gain nothing else from the book, at the very least it will set you dreaming. Life gets easier when you know the rules!

By:
Eli Tetteh
(Officer, Ashesi Writing Centre)

Alumni Profile: David Kwasi Darkwa

David Kwasi Darkwa is this year's top student, graduating with a cumulative GPA of 3.72 (Magna Cum Laude). David majored in Management Information Systems and comes from a closely-knit family of four.

David Attended Achimota School before enrolling at Ashesi. At Achimota, he studied Economics, Geography and Additional Mathematics. He excelled academically and graduated as his program's overall best student.

David is not simply focused on academics, he loves art and when he has the time creates works of his own. He states "Art is a great imaginative tool. Whatever I do not understand in concept, I draw a picture and it makes understanding easier." He admits to using this approach in his studies. He also enjoys reading and listening to classical music.

David believes his Ashesi experience gave him a head start in life. He finds it awesome that he has

changed in so many ways during his time at Ashesi. He has made some of his best friends while a student at Ashesi. His abilities as a leader has improved greatly and he helped start the Ashesi Investment Society and served as the organization's Vice-President.

Other accomplishments that he values include his work as a tutor at the Math Resource Centre where he assisted fellow students in learning difficult math concepts. He also worked as a cartoonist for a start-up company and was the 2008 Academic Committee class representative. "Ashesi definitely taught me how to multi-task!" he says.

David believes pursuing a degree in Management and Information Systems was a good decision. He

believes he is prepared to help businesses choose the right technology and software to improve their products.

David, the hundredth person to graduate from Ashesi, has been selected for an internship with Microsoft Research India. He is the second Ashesi student to be selected for their Summer internship programme. He will be working with the Technology for Emerging Markets Group in Bangalore, India from June to August 2008. He will work with Dr. Kentaro Toyama, Assistant Director for Microsoft Research India.

David describes Ashesi as "a wonderful learning environment for those who take advantage of it" and looks forward to giving back to this great institution.

By: Sarah Mills



Editor's Notes: Celebrating the promise of a powerful alumni network

Dear friends,

Thank you for your continued interest in Ashesi. Five years ago, when I applied to attend Ashesi, I wrote in one of my essays, "Ashesi will be a fane from which I will seek the highest form of inspiration." Today, more than ever, I see Ashesi in that light.

As alumni of one of the greatest tertiary institutions in Africa, we have the responsibility of ensuring we stay together as one big happy family. It is only by coming together and staying together that we can build a formidable network.

We have the potential to contribute greatly to the Ashesi legacy because we are beneficiaries and living examples of what the right kind of education can do to a people.

What we are creating is a network that enables and enhances all who come into contact with it. Let us build something important and exciting!

Please join me in congratulating the following alumni for their support of Ashesi.

- **Seyram Ahiabor'05**, is helping with prospective student recruit-

ment. He served as the chair person of the constitutional committee that drafted the constitution for the Alumni Association.

- **Ada Ojukwu'05**, facilitated a "surviving-on-the job" seminar for Ashesi students in March this year.
- **Fatou Traore'06**, is currently helping with prospective student recruitment and served as a member of the constitutional committee.
- **DreamOval'06**, donated GHc 500 to the PAW fund. The team also designed a product, *OutReach* that allows the Alumni Relations Office to stay in touch with us all.
- **Yawa Osebreh'07** co-designed and co-facilitated the first of the Alumni Speaker Series and Social Hour event.
- **Araba Amuasi'07** took on three Ashesi student volunteers for the Village of Hope (VoH).

Being an alumni of Ashesi University means something. It means individuals who add value to the lives of generations after them. It means excellence and it also means individuals who care about the communities they live in.

By joining the Alumni Association you can take an active role in molding the direction of our organization. In the upcoming months we will be electing an Alumni Council that will help shape the strategic direction of the organization and ensure that we develop programs that improve the lives of our members.

This is a campaign for Ashesi's future. Let us work together to make Ashesi the preferred undergraduate experience for the best and brightest Africans. Thank You.

Best,

Sarah Mills.



What have you done for Ashesi lately?

Recommended Readings...

(1) **African love stories** is a collection of poetry by African women writers edited by the well-known Prof. Ama Ata Aidoo.

(2) **The art of innovation** by Tom Kelley and Jonathan Littman is an inspiring guide to managing creativity in a business environment from the co-founder of one of the most innovative design companies in the world.

(3) **The ten faces of innovation** by Tom Kelley presents IDEO's strategies for beating the devil's advocate and driving creativity throughout your organization.

(4) **Veronika decides to die** by Paulo Coelho is a classic to the core. It tells the story of 24 year old Veronika, who appears to have everything in life going for her, but who decides to kill herself.

(5) **The Alchemist** by Paulo Coelho is a beautiful fable about living your personal legend.

(6) **Blue Ocean Strategy** by W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne provides a "how to create uncontested market space and put the competition to sleep" formula.

Books are available for check-out at Ashesi's library for Alumni Association members.

Kenyon Myers on remaining open to love...

I'm Kenyon Myers and this is my column. Actually, Kenyon Myers is my pseudonym. You know me because I am an Ashesi alumni and a member of the greatest Ashesi class. (Go ahead and try and figure out which class this is and who I am.)

I'd like to tell you a [real] story a friend of mine told me some years ago. He describes this story in a book he published two years ago and some of you may have read it already.

My friend, was flying from New York to Chicago to attend a book fair in the capital. He happened to be exhibiting at this fair himself. On the plane, a young man suddenly stood up in the aisle and announced: "I need twelve volunteers each willing to carry a single rose when we get off this plane." Several people raised their hands (my friend inclusive) and he chose twelve of them.

My friend tells me the most amazingly romantic thing happened when they had disembarked. (Forgive me. I'm a hopeless romantic myself.)

Once the plane had landed and they were off it, the young man indicated a young woman in the arrival hall of the airport. One by one, the passengers presented their roses to her.

At last, in front of everyone, the young man asked her to marry him. She accepted and they lived happily ever after. Interesting story, don't you think?

I have a friend who is convinced love doesn't exist. We have had several arguments on this subject because I believe love does exist but we realize it only if we remain open.

Sometimes circumstances do not permit us to show the people we care about how much we want to be there for them and how much we want to support them. However if we make an effort love can appear even in the most trying circumstances.

I read a long time ago that a girl in South America was severely beaten by her parents such that she was incapable of any physical movement, as well as the ability to speak.

Once admitted to the hospital, she was cared for by a nurse who said to her everyday: "I love you." Three weeks later, the child recovered the power of movement. Four weeks thereafter she could talk again and smile.

Lesson learned? Love transforms in as much as it destroys. I've had experiences that have left me totally broken and I know others who share the same sentiment. Love hurts. Love cures. Love is a choice. Is that not the simple truth about life?

Thousands of books have been written on love and many people have different definitions for it; but who ever has the last word? I have come to learn that love can be felt through simple actions.

These are just my thoughts; thoughts that have been influenced by experiences, association and various literature. In the end "it's the little things that matter."

So after reading this column I hope you will pick up the phone and send someone some warmth. Say sorry to the person whose heart you wounded. Do the one thing you have been postponing forever. What you should not do however, is follow a particular recipe because love requires creativity

and compromise.

One last story. There was once a rose that dreamed day and night of bees, but no bee ever landed on her. The flower however continued to dream. She would imagine a heaven full of bees that flew and landed on her. By doing this she was able to last until the next day.

One day, the moon who knew of the rose's loneliness asked her: "Aren't you tired of waiting?" "Possibly, but I have to keep trying" the rose answered. "Why?" the moon asked. "Because if I don't remain open to love, I will simply fade away."

What does this story teach us? Hope makes all things beautiful?

Hope makes us believe tomorrow will be better even given the injustices of the world.

I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I enjoyed writing it. Keep guessing who I am.

- Kenyon Myers

Upcoming Events

- June 23, 2008: **Women in the workforce** seminar series one, Ashesi's L.H.4., Building 3.
- June 27, 2008: **Alumni Karaoke Night**, Champs Sports Bar.
- July 18, 2008: Workshop on **personality types and career orientation**, Ashesi's L.H.4., Building 3.
- July 25, 2008: **Alumni Karaoke Night**, Champs Sports Bar.

Career Smarts: 10 tips to help you take charge of your career.

Explore career options. Reflect on your job by asking yourself these questions: 1) Does my current position utilize my professional abilities and talents? 2) Am I maximizing my earning potential? 3) Am I doing what I was born to do or something that I'm passionate about? If the answer is an overwhelming "no" assess your work style and personal characteristics and discover a career field that highlights them.

Brush up on job skills. On the other hand, if your career suits you, take time to better yourself at what you do. Stand out from other employees by completing the latest training and updating your industry expertise. With an Internet connection, workforce development is at your fingertips.

Meet with your boss. Instead of guessing at your strengths and weaknesses, gain the input you need directly from your boss. Schedule lunch or sit down over coffee to get his or her opinion on skills that will boost your advancement possibilities. Meeting regularly to review performance will help you re-evaluate goals and set priorities.

Set realistic career goals. Identify what you want to accomplish professionally by the end of the year and write them down in order of priority. Your goals may include improving current work performance, being promoted to a job that you're qualified for or making a complete career switch. Just make sure each goal is specific and attainable.

Establish a plan of action. Think of the required steps you need to take to get your career goals under way, and put them down on paper. Give yourself deadlines to follow, but keep them realistic. Remember that becoming CEO of a company does not happen overnight.

Start preparing now. What are you waiting for? Get a head start on your career goals today. Make a list of career challenges to conquer this week and celebrate your achievements along the way. The small steps today will lead to big accomplishments down the road.

Get organized. Take time in the slow weeks at work to rearrange your files so they are more organized and efficient. Start by archiving anything you haven't used in the last year into a file cabinet farther from your desk, leaving the files used daily closer and less cluttered.

Analyze your workday for efficiencies. Practice better time management this year. Are you making your phone calls when people are normally at their desk (8:00-9:30), rather than in meetings or at lunch (10:00-1:00)? Are you spending too much time on certain activities? Make a to-do list before you leave the office and dedicate the next day to completing those tasks.

Boost work relationships. Strong relationships with people you work with can develop in small ways. For example, keep a positive attitude when working with others or key co-worker birthdays into your calendar and recognize them on their special day. Maintaining good relationships with colleagues will not only make the office a place you

want to be but can boost work productivity. And, you never know who may get promoted and become your next boss.

Follow through on actions. Taking control of your career will not happen unless you follow through. Visualize your success regularly and don't be afraid to ask for help when necessary. More importantly, pursue your goals aggressively and resolve not to give up on reaching them.

Source: Stephen Gatlin President and C.E.O of Gatlin Education Services Inc.

Career Smarts is by courtesy of the Ashesi Career Services Centre.

**"I owe a great debt to Ashesi. I learned a lot about what I want to do in life there."
- Akorfa Hoggar'07**

"Give yourself deadlines to follow but make them realistic."

“ If” by Rudyard Kipling

Some food for thought...

If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you. If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you but make allowance for their doubting too. If you can wait and not be tired by waiting. Or being lied about, don't deal in lies, or being hated, don't give way to hating and yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise.

If you can dream--and not make dreams your master. If you can think--and not make thoughts your aim. If you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors just the same. If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools.

Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken and stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools.

If you can make one heap of all your winnings and risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss and lose, and start again at your beginnings and never breath a word about your loss. If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew to serve your turn long after they are gone and still hold on when there is nothing in you except the **will** which says to them: "hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue. Or walk with kings--nor lose the common touch. If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you. If all men count with you, but none too much. If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run; yours is the earth and everything that's in it. And--which is more--you'll be a man, my son!

The poem IF was written by Kipling in 1897 yet still holds true today.

Alumni in the News!!!

Two members of our family have been in the news recently.

Regina Agyare '05 was one of the final eight contestants on the Apprentice Africa TV series.

See www.theapprenticeafrica.com or www.reginaagyare.com

Congratulations Regina! You did us proud!

Angela Osei-Kufuor '07 works with Strategic Africa Securities (SAS). Angela has for the past 5 weeks been giving financial updates from the Ghana Stock Exchange on the Joy Business Report at noon. Tune into Joy 99.7 and listen to Angela. I do every day!

Join the Alumni Association!

Members of the Ashesi Alumni Association are a select group of individuals who care about the future of their alma mater and its next generation.

As a member of this exclusive club, you will enjoy many special benefits. Your alumni privilege card allows you to save money whenever you purchase the services of our preferred business partners. (See alumni webpage.)

As a member of this club, you will receive regular communications that will keep you informed about Ashesi and your Ashesi friends. You will enjoy the privilege of having an Ashesi-based e-mail which you can use wherever your life takes you.

You can give back to Ashesi by helping facilitate events, helping with student recruitment as well as mentoring of current Ashesi students. Display your Ashesi alumni status with our array of branded materials!

Ashesi's alumni are its heritage and alumni can support Ashesi in many ways. Contact the Alumni Relations Office today to find out ways you can contribute to the Ashesi legacy.

Contact Us

You can reach the Alumni Relations Office by e-mail at smills@ashesi.edu.gh or by telephone on (021) 784.767 or (021) 777.902

We look forward to hearing from you!