



# **Center for African Studies Strategic Plan**

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**2023 -2026**



**THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

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OFFICE OF  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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## Strategic Plan Materials

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This Strategic Plan contains three documents: (1) this actual Strategic Plan containing a list of proposed programs from Spring 2023 through Summer 2026, (2) an Executive Summary, and (3) an Appendix, which contains information explaining (a) the relevance of some specific program in fulfilling the CAS's missions, (b) the metrics for assessing the effectiveness of each program, and (c) the proposed budget and potential sources of funding. These are marked as RMC (Relevance, Metric and Cost). For example, "For RMC, see number 1 in the Appendix."

## Introduction

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This Strategic Plan seeks to guide the Center for African Studies (henceforth, CAS or the Center) in identifying and promoting impactful academic and external engagement activities that will enrich the intellectual experiences and global perspectives of Ohio State University's faculty, students, and staff, as stipulated in Ohio State's International Strategic Plan 2022-2025 as well as Office of International Affairs (OIA's) goals as stated in its self-study of 2023. The activities we prioritize in this document will also enable CAS to contribute to fulfilling the university's mission of fostering knowledge-based cultural understanding in a globalized world. Foremost in our ambition is to build the infrastructures that will enable CAS to effectively coordinate the production of Africa-centered knowledge and making such knowledge accessible to citizens of the state of Ohio and beyond. To achieve this objective, it is critical that we motivate the Africanist community and the various stakeholders to remain committed to the Center's mission of promoting the university's land-grant obligations. Ultimately, we aspire to increase the Center's administrative efficiency to effectively implement activities that will improve its chances of winning grants to sustain its programs. We also envision a strong connection with Global One Health Initiative (GOHi) to expand its activities in Africa.

### (1) Overview: History and Mission Statement

The Center for African Studies was founded on July 1, 1988, as an academic center for disseminating knowledge about Africa, and connecting Africanist scholars on campus, in Central Ohio, and across the world. It employs a multidisciplinary approach aimed at promoting and fostering collaboration across the various disciplines. The Center currently comprises over 90 Africanist faculty affiliates in 34 academic departments, which makes it one of the largest area studies centers on campus. It is located within the Office of International Affairs, and it is strongly supported by the College of Arts and Sciences. Since its founding, CAS has also established strong ties with CFAES (College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences) and other departments involved in agriculture & food security, as well as other professional schools and area studies centers. Its broad mission centers on promoting academic excellence in the study of Africa and conducting external engagements that link the Ohio State University with different African constituencies (communities, academic institutions, businesses, etc.) in a shared vision of promoting Africa-derived knowledge that takes into consideration the continent's economic, political, and cultural diversities. I summarize these double missions by focusing on the Center's core activities in two mutually reinforcing categories: academic excellence and external engagements.

### (2) CAS's Academic Missions

CAS's academic missions since its inception include:

1. Working with departments to support and expand African studies courses and promoting curriculum development with interdisciplinary approaches to African studies.
2. Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration among Ohio State scholars and faculty, and between them and their colleagues in African universities.
3. Developing and maintaining relationships between Ohio State and African universities in ways that encourage long-term interdisciplinary collaborations in all areas of academic endeavors.
4. Expanding and strengthening the teaching of African heritage languages to facilitate research on Africa by Ohio State faculty and students, and to provide language support for local businesses interested in investing in Africa.
5. Organizing lectures, symposia, conferences, workshops, and cultural events in partnership with academic units and other area studies centers, to promote knowledge about Africa.

6. Collaborating with Ohio State academic units, the Mershon Center for International Security Studies, the Center for Languages, Literatures and Cultures (CLLC), International Programs in Agriculture, as well as units within OIA including Global Education and International Students and Scholars, etc. to promote the University's vision of globalization.

### **(3) CAS's External Engagements Missions**

In addition to its foundation academic missions, CAS's external engagement activities also contribute to fulfilling its broad missions. These have included: (i) conducting Africa-related outreach to primary and secondary school teachers, government agencies, the media, and civic and communities, to expand knowledge of Africa; (ii) conducting outreach with Africa-identified diaspora communities in Columbus and Central Ohio and forming partnership with these communities to disseminate "authentic" knowledge about Africa, and coordinating and promoting collaborations between Ohio State institutions with African institutions to contribute in fulfilling the University's internationalization agenda.

### **(4) Assessments of the Center's Previous Activities: Efforts and Achievements**

During its 30 years of continuous support from OIA (1988-2018), CAS endeavored to meet its original mission in the areas of interdisciplinary academic curricula development, multi-disciplinary research collaboration platform, and outreach programs. In partnership with Ohio University, it won the prestigious Title VI grant both to serve as a National Resource Center as well as to administer Foreign Language and Area Studies scholarships (1994-2006). From 2006 to 2009 CAS administered the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language grant, through which it offered Somali language instruction as well as other curriculum. In 2012, the Center secured the Owomoyela Endowment, which combined with funds from Yoruba Club 21 (a socio-cultural ethnic group of people of Yoruba descent residing in Columbus), to create the Yoruba Studies Fund. This endowment has enabled the Center to organize annual lecture series that combine academic and cultural events, in addition to annual Owomoyela Yoruba Studies Graduate Scholarship for the study of Yoruba culture, language and history. A U.S. State Department ECA grant in 2013 launched a pilot study abroad program in Ethiopia as well as supporting capacity-building exchange with Ethiopian universities. In 2016 and 2017, CAS served as host to two Mandela Washington Fellows public management programs. Throughout these years CAS also supported its activities with smaller grants through the Ohio Humanities Council, Battelle, as well as through countless collaborations with its campus partners.

CAS accomplished these in two ways: First, with over 90 Africanist faculty affiliates in 34 academic departments (as of 2018), the Center acted as a coordinating institution, working with various departments across the university to support and expand African studies courses, along with major African languages (Swahili, Hausa, Twi, Zulu, Fulbe, Somali and Wolof). And, as part of OIA structure, it also collaborated with other Area Studies Centers, the Global Education and International Students and Scholars units, as well as with the Mershon Center for International Security Studies, the Center for Languages, Literatures and Cultures, and other units across the University to organize lectures, symposia, international conferences, and other events.

CAS was also very active in its external engagement initiatives. On campus, it encouraged the founding of Africa-identified students clubs and served as a major co-sponsor of their events. These students' clubs exist till today and serve as a testament of the Center's cultural and intellectual connections with students. It is worth noting that OIA continued to support these student organization even when the Center did not have a director. Externally, CAS also conducted various Africa-related outreach services to primary and secondary school teachers, government agencies, the media, and civic and community organizations. And, as part of its contributions to the University's globalization agenda, CAS, in collaboration with OIA's International Partnership unit, developed and maintained relationships between Ohio State and some African universities and relevant NGOs, as well as local organizations, including the Columbus Council on World Affairs. CAS's community outreach in Columbus also expanded, enabling a strong partnership with African communities that encouraged collaborations in disseminating knowledge about Africa and highlighting African cultures in the city. All of these has enabled CAS to play key roles in contributing to fulfilling the university's land-grant missions of excellence in teaching, research, and public outreach, as well as OIA's visions of promoting Ohio State's outstanding position among world-class universities. In fact, CAS deserves full credit for promoting the teachings of Somali at Ohio State. In a nutshell, during 30 years of solid activities, CAS has justified its *raison d'être*.

## **(5) Setback**

The consistent implementations of these valuable functions, which were critical to fulfilling the Center's missions, were disrupted by limited funding and leadership gap between 2017 and 2020, culminating in the termination of the Center's activities in 2020, the only Area Studies Center that experienced such major interruption. The immediate consequence of the virtual dismembering of CAS from the rest of the Area Studies Centers, was a decline of the historical collaborations among Ohio State scholars, and between them and their colleagues abroad, as well as a conspicuous disconnection with its traditional outreach partners. Remarkably, this decline occurred at the time the university is stressing campus-wide inter-disciplinary research and expending its global outreach in sync with its mission in the 21st century. Equally important, CAS' outreach and engagements with Columbus city schools and other K-12 institutions in Central Ohio, also suffered enormously, as these schools lost vital intellectual resources that had once enabled them to offer historically relevant and academically verifiable information about Africa, its people, and its cultures. The fast-growing African migrant communities in Columbus also lost some of their collaborative connections with Ohio State, connections that had once encouraged partnership with the university in promoting African cultures and disseminating authentic knowledge about Africa on campus and in the city, consistent with Ohio State's public responsibility. It is noteworthy that the absence of CAS from Ohio State area studies perimeters, occurred at a time when the African migrant communities in Columbus was growing rapidly through the arrival of new migrants as well as the growth of a second generation of African citizens of Ohio. These represented a unique demography of Ohio that deserves attention when formulating the state's public policies. CAS was well-suited for consultations in developing policies that are sensitive to cultural peculiarities.

The Africanist community was, therefore, thrilled when the university leadership acknowledged the Center's critical position in fulfilling the university's missions, and decided to reactivate it by appointing a new director and promising to hire a permanent assistant director, contingent on developing a meaningful strategic plan for the Center's activities during the next three years. This detailed document seeks to fulfil that request, while providing guidance to enable the Center to operate efficiently and strategically. We relaunched the Center on April 5, 2023, with a commitment to reinforcing the preexisting infrastructures that had enabled it in the past to contribute to the university's missions, while identifying and promoting new strategies to align with changes in technology and OIA's visions. We will do all of these by strategically targeting activities that will enable us to reach, even exceed, the benchmark for winning federal, state, and private grants and endowments. We will carefully study reports and reviewers' comments on previously unsuccessful grant applications and consult with other area studies centers that have been successful in winning Title VI, to help us shape our strategies. With a new assistant director in place, we plan to spend the first two years strengthening the Center's infrastructures. We will assess the impacts of our strategies in three key areas: a vibrant and enduring Africanist intellectual community, our success in winning big grants, and the extent to which we meet OIA internationalization vision's.

## **(6) Summary of CAS's Visions and Strategic Plan (2022/23 to 2025/26 Academic Years)**

Our strategic vision in the next three years and beyond, therefore, seeks to identify and promote activities in the two broad categories of academic and external engagements, to enhance the academic excellence and cultural experiences of Ohio State students, faculty, and staffs. These include (a) establishing key infrastructures that will enable the Center to promote inter- and cross-disciplinary works at all levels of the university, from faculty to undergraduates, (b) establishing networks that will facilitate collaborative works between Ohio State researchers and their Africa-based colleagues in ways that are consistent with values of mutuality and respect, and (c) identifying and reinforcing strategies for effective promotion of African cultures and Africa-centered knowledge on campus, through active outreach and engagement with Africa-identified communities in Columbus. These agendas seek to position CAS to effectively contribute to fulfilling the Ohio State University's public obligations of fostering cultural understanding and global citizenship of its students. In developing these programs, we are profoundly cognizant of the realities of funding, which is crucial for sustaining the Center's missions. The staff believe that a successful implementation of the plans listed in this document during the next three years, will provide ample evidence of the Center's vigorous efforts in promoting academic excellence and effective external engagement activities to improve its chances of being successful in grant applications.

## Preparatory Phase: Spring 2023 to Summer 2023 (Half Year)

### Spring 2023: Agenda and assessment

- New director training
- **Assessment: progressing**
- Upgrade CAS information database, including the webpage and listserv. These are critical for advertising African studies courses, communicating with our internal and external audiences and allies, and highlighting our visions.
- **Assessment: advanced stage.**
- Create a new Advisory Board
- **Assessment: completed.** We have created a robust Advisory Board, selected from among highly experienced and committed Ohio State Africanist faculties and students. It comprises 10 faculties from across disciplinary boundaries with varying expertise and commitments, one graduate student and one undergraduate student.
- Renew contacts with prominent individuals and stakeholders to reactivate the Center's activities and initiate new ones.
- **Assessment: progressing steadily.**
- Organize the annual Yoruba Studies Lecture and relaunch the Center.
- **Assessment: accomplished (April 5, 2023).**
- Preparing a Strategic Plan for the next three years
- **Assessment: advanced stage.** Final draft to be ready during the first week of May.
- Identify and re-establish contacts with Africa-identified students' organizations.
- **Assessment: progressing steadily.** Many of these student clubs have been informed of the relaunching of CAS. The director has attended some of the students' events and is scheduled to participate in their end of year events. He has also accepted to be the keynote speaker at the African Youth League Annual Gala in April.
- Initiate the process of hiring a permanent Assistant Director by Autumn 2024
- **Assessment: progressing.** Awaiting the approval of the provost.

## Summer 2023: Preparing for Year 1 (2023/24 Academic Year)

Summer of 2023 will be devoted to preparing for full CAS programs starting AU 2023, including:

- Continue reestablishing contacts with CAS allies and stakeholders.
- Complete updating and reclassifying CAS files and other communication materials.
- Engage with the hiring of a permanent Assistant Director.
- Start identifying and building partnership with recent African diaspora communities in Columbus.
- Consult with other area studies centers to identify strategies for external engagement with Columbus-city schools and other K-12 institutions in Columbus and Central Ohio.
- Begin recreating African intellectual community on campus in readiness for activities such as Africa at Noon monthly or bi-monthly events.
- Identify and invite graduate students to volunteer for CAS ambassadorial responsibilities in readiness for autumn activities.
- Identify and invite students and other interested partners to join the Africa Network Group.
- Consult with African and African American Studies Department (AAAS) and the Center for Languages, Literature and Cultures, Language (CLLC) to assess the factors that would allow the reintroduction of key/heritage African languages that have now disappeared from the curriculum (including Wolof, Fulbe, Twi, Hausa). As of spring 2023,

the CLLC offers only Somali and Swahili. We understand the enrollment challenges Ohio State is facing regarding language offerings due in part to the new GE requirements as well as a nation-wide decline in enrollment in language programs. Nonetheless, we would like to determine what role CAS could play to ignite students' interests in African heritage languages, especially those with strong diaspora communities here in Columbus. This conversation is critical for the Center to write a successful FLAS application.

## Year One (Autumn 2023 to Summer 2024)

**Theme:** Challenges and Opportunities for African Studies Centers in the 21st Century.

### Introduction

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During this first full year of my tenure as the director, we plan to establish the key institutions that will support and help sustain CAS's core missions as identified in sections 2 and 3 above. Our tentative theme focuses on assessing the opportunities and challenges facing African studies centers throughout the country and in Africa. We chose this theme to enable us to acknowledge the continued relevance of area studies centers for knowledge production, while recognizing the challenges posed by factors associated with the post-Covid environment and shifting United States' foreign policy priorities. We envision that, a public and academic discussions of the different angles of this theme will produce new ideas, sharpen our strategies, and motivate CAS's stakeholders to remain committed to ensuring its continuous existence. While this will remain an ongoing conversation and strategizing, we plan to organize at least one invited lecture to be followed by an open conversation to allow academics and non-academics to engage with the issue. All this will begin with building and sustaining a strong and committed Africanist community for effective cross-disciplinary collaboration across Ohio State campuses and with colleagues in Africa.

To this end, in 2023/24 AY, we plan to develop CAS into an "intellectual home" for Africanists faculties and students, regardless of their disciplines. The immediate implementation of the following programs will help us achieve that objective, while allowing us to employ CAS platforms to connect Ohio State Africanist researchers with their colleagues in Africa.

- Africa at Noon: A platform for sharing and collaborating on research across the disciplines. This monthly or bi-monthly presentations seek to encourage Africanist faculties, students, and staff from all disciplines to share present their works and to receive feedback from colleagues. This forum is an excellent mechanism for community-building. We plan to offer the first session in October 2023.
- Invited Lectures (2 lectures)
  - Organize one invited lecture each semester on Year One's theme: Challenges and Opportunities for African Studies Centers post-Covid. One of these may be the Owomoyela Lecture, during spring 2024.
- Forum for Public Conversation on Current Events and Hot News from Africa
  - Organize a non-structured public conversation on "hot news" from Africa at least once every semester or as events dictate, to allow Ohio State community as well as Africans in the city of Columbus to provide contexts and nuances to sharpen the general public's understanding of current events in Africa. To encourage good attendance, we plan to provide some refreshments during these events. **For RMC, see 1 in the Appendix.**
- Partnership with other U.S.-Based African Studies Institutions and Colleagues across the Globe
  - CAS will reach out to form partnership with other regional African studies programs such as Ohio University and University of Pittsburgh, to develop and promote graduate and undergraduate programs, including language offerings that are becoming increasing difficult to offer at Ohio State. **For RMC, see 2 in the Appendix.**
- Reactivating the Visiting Scholar Program
  - Expanding collaborations between Ohio State researchers and African colleagues will obviously enhance Ohio State's visibility on the continent, which will benefit both institution in multiple ways. We will encourage and support our colleagues to apply for the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Fellowship. In addition, CAS will contact other centers including Mershon, to sponsor at least one visiting scholar per year for a period of 3-6 months on a budget not exceeding \$10,000. These visiting scholars can help us identify and recruit high achieving African post-graduate students into doctoral programs in various departments, thus contributing to the University's diversity initiatives while also helping to train Africa's future intellectuals. **For RMC, see 3 in the Appendix.**

- Establish Student Ambassador Corps
  - This will enable students affiliated with CAS and its institutional partners to engage in outreach with African communities and K-12 schools (see below). These Student Ambassadors would commit to doing at least 2 presentations per semester in Columbus school system and other K-12 schools in Columbus and central Ohio. They would be paid \$150.00 (or \$200.00 if outside Columbus) for each presentation, to cover their time and transportation. **For RMC, see 4 in the Appendix.**
- Africa Network Group (ANG)
  - Complementing the Student Ambassador Corp, we envision recreating the Africa Network Group, comprising students and faculty, to serve as the socio-cultural bridge between the Center and the greater Ohio State and Columbus communities. We plan to partner with AAAS Extension Center to identify and recruit individuals for this initiative. As a more specialized body, the ANG will coordinate CAS relationships with various constituencies (school districts, businesses, interested individuals and legislative networks) to help us tap into the much-needed resources and support for carrying out our agendas. **For RMC, see 5 in the Appendix.**
- Establish Sustainable Partnership between CAS and the Columbus school District and other K-12 schools in Central Ohio
  - During autumn 2023, we will begin consultations to establish sustainable connections with K-12 schools to help these schools deliver authentic knowledge about Africa in their classrooms. K-12 teachers frequently consult with CAS to send student presenters, particularly those who grew up in or lived in Africa, to present in their classrooms and to provide invaluable cultural exposure to their students. The Outreach Coordinator (OC) will facilitate the process of identifying a member of the Student Ambassador Corp to respond to such requests. The OC will also engage in conversations these schools to assess interests in our proposed summer teachers' workshop on teaching African studies (see below). **For RMC, see 6 in the Appendix.**
- Organize Annual Summer K-12 Teachers Workshop on Teaching about Africa
  - In summer 2024 we will partner with other area studies centers to organize a week-long workshop on teaching African studies in a globalized world for K-12 teachers in Columbus. The workshop will focus on helping teachers identify high quality Africa-centered teaching materials (textbooks, video, images, maps, etc.), that recognize the diversities of African societies, history, and cultures. We will begin the planning and applying for grants during autumn 2023. **For RMC, see 7 in the Appendix.**
- Promote African Cultural Events on Campus
  - To create an African presence on campus, we plan to organize annual African cultural events, including art exhibition, poetry recitations, music, cloth exhibitions, African cuisine exhibition to be sampled by the Ohio State community, etc. The purpose here is to encourage members of the recent African diaspora communities to participate in the Center's mission of providing space for highlighting Africa's cultures, and for business leaders to promote their businesses. We envision partnering with the various Africa-centered student organizations, members of the Africa Network, and the African Ambassadors to participate in organizing these cultural events. **For RMC, see 8 in the Appendix.**
- Establish Sustainable Network for Partnership between Ohio State and Africa-identified Communities in Columbus and Central Ohio
  - To sustain continuous external engagements with the African communities in Columbus, we plan, starting from year one, to develop a sustainable collaboration partnership with African-identified communities in Columbus and across Ohio. A stronger relationship with these communities is invaluable in enabling CAS to fulfil its broad mission of promoting African cultures and knowledge about Africa at Ohio State, in Columbus, and in the State of Ohio. We plan to employ the services of the Africa Ambassador Corps and the Africa Network Group to help establish and expand the networks for these relationships. **For RMC, see 9 in the Appendix.**
- Stronger Collaboration with GOHi
  - As part of CAS's pursuit of strong collaboration with other OIA units, we plan to engage with GOHi. We have learned that there is a strong interest among GOHi leadership to extend its influence to the West, and to create a regional headquarters to coordinate its activities in the region. The director's conversation with Dr. Gebreyes has convinced us that CAS has the capacity to facilitate this process. Our major agenda is, therefore, to facilitate the realization of this goal. We plan to begin this endeavor as early as autumn 2023, with an initial group exploratory visit to Ghana.



- Work on Grant Applications
  - Consult with appropriate Ohio State offices responsible for developing grant applications to help with strategies for writing winnable grant applications.
- Partnership with International Businesses
  - CAS staff will work to enlist the support and presence of International Firms and NGOs that are doing businesses in Africa, especially those with offices in the greater Columbus. Such relationships will help us connect students on African Studies Track with firms that will offer them internships and employments. The socio-cultural and language knowledge of our graduates from various African countries will increasingly become important and should be available to firms that need their expertise. These will start with these firms participating in Ohio State career week.

**\*\*The programs listed in Year One are foundational activities that the Center has historically engaged with, and they will remain part of each year's activities.**

## ● Year Two (Autumn 2024 to Summer 2025)

**Theme:** Empowering Young African Scholars and Community Leaders

### Introduction

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By the end of 2023/24 AY, we hope to have put in place key foundational and ongoing programs that will enable CAS to launch other ambitious programs crucial for fulfilling its mission. We will aim at those programs that will improve the Center's chances of winning grants. Accordingly, in addition to the proposed summer teachers' workshop, Summer of 2024 will be devoted to writing grant applications for the forthcoming application season. Our proposed theme for 2024/25 AY is "Empowering Young African Scholars and Community Leaders." The following proposed strategic agendas are intended to highlight different approaches to empowering Africa's young intellectuals and community leaders.

- Work on Grant Applications
  - Summer 2024 will be devoted to developing grant applications for the teachers' workshop, conferences, language studies, etc.
- Annual Graduate Students Workshops
  - We plan to establish annual graduate students' workshops, with students as the leading organizers. Our initial plan is to partner with one of our peer institutions, such as Ohio University, to organize this annual interdisciplinary workshop. We are aiming at Spring 2025, but preparation will begin during autumn 2024. **For RMC, see 10 in the Appendix.**
- Organize a Leadership Training Workshop for Youth Leaders in Recent African Diaspora Communities
  - As part of our external engagements with African communities in Columbus, we plan to offer youth leadership training workshop once every summer aimed at empowering the youths to play important leadership roles in their communities. The key idea here is to contribute to nurturing a new generation of African community leaders that will identify with the Center's missions and participate and support its activities. Our objective is to tap into the potentials of a future generation of entrepreneurs, business leaders, and other professionals, as early as possible in the hope that, in the future, they will support the Center's initiatives financially and otherwise. Our outreach and engagement with the youth will also help us recruit qualified high school students for the Ohio State University. We envision employing the services of the CAS Ambassadors and the Africa Network Group in organizing these workshops. We will partner with AAAS Extension Center for this initiative as well. **For RMC, see 11 in the Appendix.**
- Recognition for Outstanding Academic and External Engagement Awards
  - As part of empowering and motivating Africanist students, we propose that each year, CAS offers awards to high achieving graduate and undergraduate students who have taken African studies courses, as well as those who have devoted their time to the Center's activities. This will be in addition to the Owomoyela Yoruba Studies

Scholarship. We estimate three \$500 awards each year. The financial incentive will enhance the students' profiles and empower them. The awards will also inspire and motivate other students to engage actively with the Center, while maintaining academic excellence. The awards would be made at the end of the spring semester during CAS's Annual reception. **For RMC, see 12 in the Appendix.**

- Promote the Teaching of African Languages
  - We will consult and coordinate with AAAS and the Center for Languages, Literature and Cultures to add at least two more African languages to their offerings by academic year 2024/25. The promotion of the study of African languages remains one of CAS's core initiatives that fulfills its area studies' missions. **For RMC, see 13 in the Appendix.**
- Promote the Study Abroad to Africa Program
  - Study Abroad to Africa Program is a key component of CAS's missions of promoting objective knowledge about Africa to broaden Ohio State students' global perspectives and profiles. We plan to consult with AAAS and other academic units to reactivate the program. In the past, the Ghana and South Africa Study Abroad programs were very popular with Ohio State students. To that end, we will also recommend the establishment of a residential study abroad program that will have different components. For example, it could involve faculty members from Ohio State teaching in an African university with Ohio State study abroad students taking those courses alongside students from the host institution. Our students would also enroll in cultural and/or language courses in the host institution. This approach may produce a deeper study abroad experience, while enhancing Ohio State's global profile. **For RMC, see 14 in the Appendix.**
- Certificate in African Studies
  - We will consult with AAAS to reactivate the African Studies Certificate Program at the bachelor's level, in addition to a minor in African studies. Similarly, we will work with the Political Science Dept. to promote their African studies concentration. We also envision a Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization that will boost our students' marketable skills. All of these provide opportunities for discussions with various units and for collaboration in teaching among our Ohio State faculty. **For RMC, see 15 in the Appendix.**
- Organize Annual Summer Workshop on Teaching about Africa
  - In summer 2024 we will partner with other units to organize the first workshop on teaching African studies in a globalized world for K-12 teachers. Considering the rapid growth of the African migrant communities in Columbus, the demand for Africa-centered curriculum will continue to grow. The workshop will also help teachers to prepare students with foundational knowledge in preparation for college. **For RMC, see 16 in the Appendix.**
- Organize the First Conference on Contemporary African Affairs with Global Implications
  - Every other year, beginning with spring 2025, the Center, in collaboration with other area studies, will organize a conference on themes that have trans-national reach, such as migration in the 21st century; reassessing post-cold war democratization in the developing world; the impacts of global warming on Africa's development; water crises; cybersecurity and cybercrime; etc. For spring 2025, we suggest a conference on contemporary migration. This topic has a global breath and will interest other units and area studies centers as well as Mershon. **For RMC, see 17 in the Appendix.**
- Group Project Abroad (GPA)
  - Pending successful GPA grant application and other sources of funding, we plan to organize a project abroad trip to an African country with faculties and researchers from a range of fields to promote OIA's international multidisciplinary research. **For RMC, see 18 in the Appendix.**
- Submit Grant Applications
  - Summer 2025 will be devoted to completing the Title VI grant application to be submitted in 2026. Staff time will also be directed toward preparing for Year 3.

## Year Three (2025/26 Academic Year)

**Theme:** Opportunities and Challenges of Generating Knowledge about Africa in the Digital Age

### Introduction

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One of the contemporary challenges of promoting fact-based knowledge about Africa is the ease with which knowledge is generated and disseminated by non-specialists through social media, blogs, etc. Widespread misinformation platforms often reinforce sensational, exotic, and distorted representations of Africa that are often considered facts by the non-specialists. How can African studies address these concerns? We anticipate that, identifying intellectual engagements that will shed light on the challenges of knowledge production in the digital age, will improve our chances of winning grants from the U.S. Department of Education as well as non-government grants.

- Submit Grant applications (Title VI, FLAS, IFLE)
  - By Year 3, we believe we have established a robust foundation and innovative programs in the broad categories of academic and external engagements to improve our chances of obtaining large and small grants. We will, ambitiously, target Title VI, but also smaller grants such as mini-Title VI, International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE), National Research Council (NRC), Group Project Abroad (GPA), and other state, private and federal grants.
- Organize the Second Conference on Contemporary African Issues with Global Implications
  - Pending discussions with the various stakeholders, assessment of the previous conference, and a successful funding application, we plan to organize the second international conference on contemporary African issues either in autumn 2026 or spring 2027. Our suggested tentative theme is the impacts of cyberinsecurity and cybercrime on the West African Sahel crises. This topic will be of interest to Mershon and other units. We will consider partnering with University of Florida, which has a strong research agenda on the Sahara crises. Our aim here is to make this conference an annual CAS event. **For RMC, see 19 in the Appendix.**
- Second Group Project Abroad (GPA)
  - Pending successful GPA grant application and other sources of funding, we plan to organize another project abroad trip to a different African country to promote the university's international multidisciplinary research vision. We will identify a theme that will attract researchers from a range of fields. Timing will be explored in consultation with other units. **For RMC, see 20 in the Appendix.**
- Organize a Summer Workshop on Teaching about Africa
  - Based on a positive assessment of the previous years' experience and a successful NEH grant application, we will organize another Teacher's Workshop on teaching African studies in the age of digital misinformation for K-12 teachers. **For RMC, see 21 in the Appendix.**

### Conclusion

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The strategic programs identified in this document are critical to the Center's successful execution of its missions, but they also target benchmark programs for successful grant applications. We recognize that the Title VI National Resource Center funding is crucial for the sustenance of area studies at public institutions throughout the country. Therefore, from the onset we will begin mapping out our plans and putting together the dossiers in preparation for this big grant, while applying for smaller state and federal grants that will enable the Center to implement its foundational programs. We also have our eyes set on motivating African diaspora communities and wealthy individuals to support our endowment efforts to enable us to provide annual awards in recognition of high-achieving students who have taken African studies courses. Our hope is that these awards will bring students to African studies courses, while the endowments will create and maintain a strong partnership with African communities in the State of Ohio. Ohio State Africanist community of scholars and students remain confident in the Center's capacity to continue to provide specialized services to enrich the intellectual and cultural experiences of Ohio State University community and the citizens of Ohio. Yet, these laudable programs cannot be effectively implemented if the Center does not have a permanent Assistant Director. We, therefore, encourage the University to consider hiring a permanent Assistant Director by the beginning of autumn 2023 to enable the Center to become functional again.

## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Public Conversation on Current Events and Hot News from Africa

- Relevance: Fulfills CAS's academic mission of promoting knowledge about Africa on campus and in the State of Ohio, thus fulfilling the University's land-grant mission.
- Metric: Attendance and feedback from attendees.
- Cost: \$1,000/AY. From operational budget and co-sponsorship.

### Appendix 2: Partnership with other U.S.-Based African Studies Institutions and Colleagues Across the Globe

- Relevance: Fulfills CAS's core academic mission of promoting multi-disciplinary research collaboration with local and international colleagues; important in connecting Ohio State with other African studies programs to develop mechanisms of resource sharing. Our outreach to colleagues in Africa will also help us connect with African governments, businesses and NGOs.
- Metric: Responses of international colleagues to our invitations and offers; the number of high-achieving African students who apply to Ohio State.
- Cost and sources: Estimate to be assessed. Sources will include external grants and other Ohio State supports from the Global Gateways, etc.

### Appendix 3: The Visiting Scholar Program

- Relevance: Fulfills CAS's academic mission of promoting multi-disciplinary research collaboration with international colleagues, promotes Ohio State's vision of internationalization, and will facilitate recruitment of high-achieving students from the continent.
- Metric: Responses of international colleagues to our invitations and offers, and success in Fulbright and other grants.
- Cost and sources: \$20,000/AY. Sources will include Fulbright scholars' program or other fellowship programs, co-sponsorship with other area studies centers and academic units, and OIA's Global One Health Initiative (GOHi).

### Appendix 4: Student Ambassador Corps

- Relevance: Fulfills the University's land-grant mission of supporting local communities through outreach; will connect students with the Center; will empower students through enhancing their communication skills; offers opportunities for students to enhance their profiles and boost their cv; fulfils CAS's academic and external engagements missions.
- Metric: Success to be assessed by the volume of requests and performance evaluations and feedback from the schools.
- Cost and sources: \$2,000/Academic Year. From operational budget allocations and support from AAAS Extension Center.

### Appendix 5: Africa Network Group (ANG)

- Relevance: Contributes to fulfilling CAS's external engagement mission of offering practical skills for students and enhances their community engagement profiles.
- Metric: Performance evaluations and feedback.
- Cost and sources: Estimate unavailable. Sources of funding will include support from AAAS Extension Center's Mellon grant.

### Appendix 6: Partnership between CAS and the Columbus School District and other K-12 schools in Central Ohio

- Relevance: Fulfills CAS's academic and external engagements of providing academic and cultural knowledge to enrich the experiences of K-12 students.
- Metric: Volume of requests addressed per year, and evaluations of speakers by the hosts.
- Cost: See section on Student Ambassadors.

**Appendix 7:** Annual Summer K-12 Teachers Workshop on Teaching about Africa.

- Relevance: Fulfills CAS's academic missions by helping K-12 teachers acquire knowledge about how to teach African studies and where to find effective materials.
- Metrics: Success will be assessed through feedback and evaluation of attendees, and success in future grant applications.
- Cost and source: Estimate not available; will apply for NEH and Ohio Humanities Council grants, in addition to seeking co-sponsors, etc.

**Appendix 8:** African Cultural Events on Campus

- Relevance: Fulfills the University's mission of promoting cultural awareness; motivates African diaspora communities to connect with CAS's mission of highlighting Africa's cultures on campus.
- Metric: Volume of attendance and active participation of African communities; solicited feedback, etc.
- Cost and sources: \$2,000 yearly (for refreshments). Source of funding includes operational budget and co-sponsors from academic units and Africa-identified student organizations.

**Appendix 9:** Partnership between Ohio State and Africa-identified Communities in Columbus and Central Ohio

- Relevance: Contributes to fulfilling the university's public obligations of promoting African cultures and knowledge about Africa.
- Metric:
- Cost: None.

**Appendix 10:** Annual Graduate Students Workshops

- Relevance: This forum offers our students enormous academic benefits and incentives to gain experience in organizing events, presenting their own work, and networking with other students across the region, all in an interdisciplinary setting. It will thus contribute to nurturing the intellectual and organizational competence of our students, and empower them to assume leadership roles within their intellectual and social networks.
- Metric: We will measure success by the number of panels and presentation topics, as well as solicited feedback from attendees regarding the ways the workshop contributed in empowering them.
- Cost and sources: \$15,000. We will apply for conference grants from external and internal sources to cover the cost.

**Appendix 11:** African Youth Leadership Training Workshop

- Relevance: Will contribute to fulfilling CAS's mission of external engagements with Africa-identified diaspora communities in Columbus, while establishing the infrastructure for an enduring partnership between CAS and these communities as well as individuals. The workshops will also provide opportunities for recruiting African students to Ohio State, thus enriching the universities cultural diversity initiatives.
- Metric: We will assess our success by the responses of the African youths to the program and the volume of applications in subsequent years.
- Cost and sources: \$1,500 per workshop, including stipend for the trainers and meals for the attendees. Will identify suitable grants and co-sponsorship with AAAS Extension Center.

**Appendix 12:** Recognition for Outstanding Academic and External Engagement Awards

- Relevance: Will motivate Africanist graduate and undergraduate students to maintain academic excellence, thus empowering them.
- Metric:
- Cost and source of funding: Operational budget, co-sponsorship, Owomoyela Yoruba Studies funds.

**Appendix 13:** Teaching of African Languages

- Relevance: Coordinating the offerings of African languages will strengthen the Center's FLAS and International Foreign Language Education grant applications. In the past, these grants have enabled CAS to implement many innovative programs.
- Metric: Successful FLAS and IFLE grant applications.
- Cost and sources: None.

#### **Appendix 14: Study Abroad to Africa Program**

- **Relevance:** Study abroad is a key component of CAS's mission of promoting African studies and languages to deepen Ohio State students' global outlook, consistent with U.S. Department of Education's international education programs and OIA's internationalization agenda. Study abroad programs that involve Ohio State faculties teaching in African universities is expected to reinforce collaboration and partnership between Ohio State's faculty and their colleagues in Africa. This is also consistent with OIA's vision. If it is well-executed, such a program will also facilitate recruitment of highly qualified African students to the Ohio State, thus contributing to the university's vision of diversifying the student body.
- **Metrics:** Assessment will be based on participants' feedback.
- **Cost:** Zero. Cost will be borne by sponsoring units.

#### **Appendix 15: Certificate in African Studies**

- **Relevance:** Seeks to promote African studies courses, consistent with CAS's foundational mission.
- **Metric:** Effectiveness will be assessed by the number of students who take advantage of the certificate programs annually.
- **Cost:** None.

#### **Appendix 16: Annual Summer Workshop on Teaching about Africa**

- **Relevance:** Will fulfill CAS's mission of promoting knowledge about Africa consistent with the university's public responsibility. In this case, K-12 teachers will be equipped with the pedagogical tools to prepare college-bound students more efficiently. The workshop would also provide the opportunity for identifying and recruiting qualified students of color to Ohio State to enhance the university's diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- **Metric:** Success will be assessed through feedback of participants and other units.
- **Cost and sources of funding:** we will apply for fitting grants from federal, state and private sources.

#### **Appendix 17: Conference on Contemporary African Affairs with Global Implications**

- **Relevance:** Fulfills OIA's internationalization vision; promotes CAS's mission of fostering interdisciplinary collaborations with colleagues abroad consistent with the university's agenda of promoting faculty research collaboration.
- **Metric:** Impact will be assessed through responses to invitation and feedback of participants.
- **Cost and sources of funding:** To be assessed in consultation with partner units such as AAAS, History, the Mershon Center, etc. We will apply for funding from Mershon as well as external grants (e.g. U.S. Department of Education).

#### **Appendix 18: Group Project Abroad (GPA)**

- **Relevance:** Seeks to promote interdisciplinary research collaboration among Ohio State researchers and between Ohio State researchers and colleagues in an African university.
- **Metric:** Evaluations by participants and OIA assessment.
- **Cost and source of funding:** The trips will be funded through the U.S. Department of Education Group Project Abroad grants.

#### **\*Appendix 19: Organize the Second Conference on Contemporary African Issues with Global Implications**

- **Relevance:** Obviously, winning substantial grants will enable CAS to develop and implement innovative programs that are consistent with OIA's visions.
- **Metric:**
- **Cost and source:** TBD.

**\*Appendix 20:** Second Group Project Abroad (GPA)

- Relevance
- Metrics
- Cost and source of funding

**Appendix 21:** Organize Annual Summer Workshop on Teaching about Africa

- Relevance: These summer teachers' workshops are consistent with OIA's K-12 education initiatives, and CAS's core mission of promoting "authentic" knowledge about Africa.
- Metric: Evaluations by participants and OIA assessment.
- Cost and source of funding: NEH, Department of Education grants, etc.



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