



**CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES**



## **2021-2022 Annual Report**

*Creating, Cultivating, and Continuing Connections*



University of  
**Pittsburgh**

Center for African Studies  
University Center for International Studies

# Table of Contents

<a href="#"><u>A Message from Our Interim Director.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>3-4</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Meet our Team.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>5-9</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Certificate in African Studies.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>10</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Connect with Our Graduating Students.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>11-16</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Faculty Reports.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>17-22</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Welcoming New Africanist Scholars.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>23-24</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Events and Activities.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>25</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Let's Talk Africa.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>East Africa Field-Based Program.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>27</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Model African Union for College Students.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>28</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Model African Union for High School.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>29</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>K-12 School Visits.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>30</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Looking Ahead and Appreciation.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>31</u></a>



# A Message From Our Interim Director

## Dr. Catherine Koverola

It is my pleasure to present the 2021-2022 Annual Report of the Center for African Studies. I joined this incredible team in February 2022 and we have been hard at work ensuring that African Studies has a strong presence on campus.

For the first time ever, the Center for African Studies was awarded Title VI funding from the United States Department of Education, making us a recognized National Resource Center! We couldn't have done this without our talented team and students. We look forward to the opportunities this grant will help us open for the Pitt community, the local Pittsburgh community, as well as ways it will help us serve and uplift the African continent.

The NRC funding provides resources for significantly expanding our academic programming and support for students studying African languages and area studies. With our FLAS funding, we will develop programs for students and educators to learn Swahili and Arabic, as well as open more opportunities for Amharic study. We are working with the Less-Commonly-Taught-Languages Center to nurture Amharic programming at Pitt. Less-commonly-taught-languages are vital for students to engage with the world as global citizens and widen cultural access to their larger communities and work partners.

This funding will also be used to support the Community Colleges of Beaver and Allegheny County in their education programs, especially with Swahili and area studies. It will provide support towards conference funds and professional development with these local community

colleges, as well as the Great Lakes and Appalachia Consortium. A major goal of the Center for African Studies is to make teaching Africa more accessible to educators so that more students can learn and engage with African history and knowledge. This grant helps us support educators as they broaden their cultural horizons.

In addition to receiving this funding, we held a number of successful events, most notably the Model African Union for high school students, our outreach to K-12 schools, and our Let's Talk Africa! lecture series. Because we held our Model African Union virtually, we were thrilled to be able to welcome a school from Philadelphia and Dakha-lia Stem School from Egypt! I am particularly proud that we were able to re-launch our East Africa Field-Based Program in which graduate students conducted research and internships in Uganda and Kenya over the summer.

With deep gratitude, we thank our supporters, our affiliated faculty, the office of the director of UCIS and the Office of the Provost. In our Annual Report you will find more information about our events, updates from our faculty, and our amazing graduating students.





# Meet Our Team

## Dr. Catherine Koverola, Interim Director



Dr. Catherine Koverola is an executive leader in higher education with extensive global engagement, particularly across the African continent. She has a lifelong commitment to building inclusive diverse academic communities and social uplift. Most recently she served as the president of the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford and Titusville.

Previously, she served as the inaugural provost at the African Leadership University based in Mauritius where she laid the academic foundation for a multi campus institution. While provost at Cambridge College she co-directed the Mandela Washington Fellows program. At Lesley University, in partnership with UNICEF Guyana and the Ministry of Education and Social Services, she led the development of a graduate program for child welfare workers in Guyana.

Dr. Koverola has been engaged in global partnerships in Malawi, Uganda, and Rwanda as well as in Jordan, Israel, and Colombia and lectured in both Finland and Norway. An outstanding fundraiser, over her career she has raised over \$20 million to support student and faculty scholarship efforts and institutional priorities.

Dr. Koverola is an interdisciplinary minded clinical psychologist and internationally recognized scholar in interpersonal violence. She brings clinical and research experience with Indigenous communities in Canada and Alaska where she developed models for culturally relevant care for traumatized populations. Dr. Koverola brings a well-honed intercultural understanding to her work as evidenced by her most recent co-authored book published by Routledge, *Building Trust between Faculty and Administrators: An Intercultural Perspective*.

# Meet Our Team

## Dr. Macrina C. Lelei, Associate Director



Dr. Lelei has been instrumental in the growth and development of the Center for African Studies since its founding in 2001. She received her formative education in her home country of Kenya where she also obtained her bachelor's degree from Kenyatta University. She taught high school in Kenya before coming to Pittsburgh to pursue further education. She obtained her master's degree from Pitt's School of Li-

brary and Information science, and her Ph.D. from Pitt's School of Education. Upon graduation she joined the center for African Studies where she enjoys building new programming, advising students, leading study abroad groups to Africa, doing outreach to schools and community and working with affiliated faculty to strengthen African Studies. She also serves as a part-time instructor for the School of Education.

## Dr. Anna-Maria Karnes, Academic Advisor



Dr. Karnes enjoys sharing knowledge and cultural understanding about Africa with students, communities, and schools in the tri-state area. Born in Cameroon, Dr. Karnes has had a love for Africa her entire life. She has traveled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. Dr.

Karnes received her Ph.D. from Pitt's School of Education in 2019, where she focused her research on women and higher education in Ethiopia. She loves engaging with students and learning about their passions and career goals, and encouraging them to study abroad in Africa. Her door is always open to anyone who would like to share their experiences or discuss opportunities.

# Meet Our Team

## **Melissa Tabak, Administrative Assistant**



Melissa was the Administrative Assistant for the Center for African Studies from September 2021 to August 2022, when she left to begin law school. As the Center's Administrative Assistant, Melissa shared her passion for Africa with students, coordinated and organized events, and managed the Center's office. We wish her well in her studies and career!

## **Joyce Mutsoli Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant**



After working with us virtually for a year, Joyce finally joined us in person! Joyce is a secondary school English teacher from Kakamega County, Kenya. At Pitt, Joyce helped teach Swahili and hosted conversation hours to enhance students' speaking skills while she earned her Master's in education.

Joyce visited local K-12 schools to give presentations about her culture and language. The Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

# Meet Our Team

## **Carolyn Brodie, Graduate Fellow**



Carolyn graduated with her Master's of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling at Pitt, where she also completed her undergraduate degrees in Psychology and Africana Studies. She traveled to Tanzania through Pitt's Panther program, where she studied East African public health systems and Swahili language and culture. Congratulations, Carolyn!

## **Nneoma Ozoukwu, Graduate Fellow**



Nneoma graduated from the accelerated Master of Public Health program with a Philosophy major, Chemistry minor and certificate in African Studies. She studied abroad in Tanzania and completed an internship at the Lakeshore Cancer Center in Nigeria. Nneoma plans to pursue a career in medicine. Congratulations, Nneoma!



# Meet Our Team

## **Valentina Akpa, Graduate Fellow**



Valentina joined the Center from Abuja, Nigeria. She graduated from Nnamdi Azikiwe University with a bachelor's in linguistics. She has worked in NGOs and corporations in Nigeria. Valentina is a student at Pitt's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and plans to pursue a career in economic development. Congradulations, Valentina!

## **Emmanuel Ampofo, Student Ambassador**



Emmanuel was born in Ghana but lives in Bucks County, PA. He plans to attend pharmacy school after completing his undergraduate degree. During his freshman year, he served as a work-study intern. He was an undergraduate ambassador for the Center and loved to share his interests and speak about his home continent. He is also a secretary of RISE and a Provost Academy Leader, where he mentors first year students. He is passionate about showing the world that Africa has gifted minds. Congradulations, Emmanuel!

# The Certificate in African Studies

The Center for African Studies offers graduate and undergraduate certificates. The program deepens students' understanding of Africa through a wide array of courses on topics including African cultures, business, economics, education, environment, history, health, languages, politics, law, and religion. Students who complete the certificate are more prepared for today's job market and become better global citizens.

This year, 6 students (5 graduates and 1 undergraduate) received the Certificate in African Studies. We offer them our heartfelt congratulations on their accomplishments. Here we share their stories in their own words.

## **Undergraduate**

Maja Lynn

## **Graduate**

Zeinab Abbas

Karla Bonilla Portilla

Nicholas P. Clegg

Leila Fadel

Gifty Owusu-Tawiah



# Connect with Our Graduating Students

## **Maja Lynn** Undergraduate



I'm from Philadelphia, PA and I am a museum studies and anthropology major with a BPhil in international and area studies. I participated in the African Studies certificate to support my BPhil work, which was on the commemoration of the OvaHerero and Nama genocide that took place in Namibia from 1904-1908.

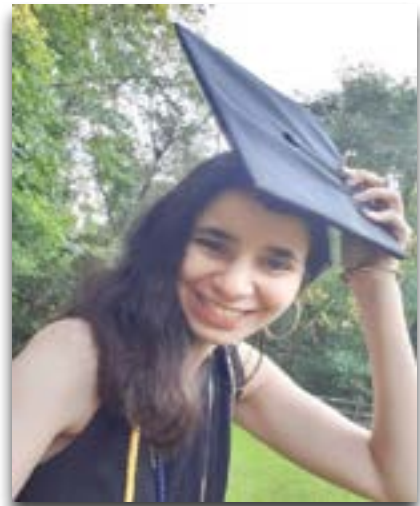
The courses that I engaged with through this certificate program were important in helping me gain an understanding of colonialism, the political and historical background of the genocide, the OvaHerero people, and of German imperialism. My research looks specifically at how OvaHerero activists have worked to establish their history within international genocide discourse. These efforts have helped them gain the political leverage needed to have skulls stolen by colonial soldiers repatriated by museums. I completed ethnographic research in Berlin, Germany in order to interview Afro-German activists of colonial histories and museum professionals on their opinions on these repatriations and ongoing struggles for commemoration.

Next year, I will continue to focus on the roles of museums in addressing past conflicts. As a Marshall Scholar, I will earn my MA at the University of Queens Belfast in Conflict Transformation and Social Justice. I hope that I will be able to continue my research on Namibia and the OvaHerero through a comparative study once I have the chance to conduct research in Belfast as well.

# Connect with Our Graduating Students

## **Zeinab Abbas** Graduate

I am originally from Quebec, Canada. I came to Pittsburgh to study Political Science and French at the University of Pittsburgh, where I spent my undergraduate years studying European and Africa politics.



In my graduate career, I focused on African politics, issues, and cultures. Therefore, getting an African Studies Certificate seemed only logical. My experience with African studies led me to the “Pearl of Africa” state of Uganda. In Uganda, I was working on the “Hidden People’s Project” where, for five weeks, the team did research on marginalized groups and communities. These groups include: people and survivors of domestic and social conflict such as albinism and blindness, acid-attack survivors, children of war, etc. This was accomplished by identifying said groups, why those groups were being marginalized, by whom, and to what extent. My research focused on the division between the North and South of the nation and identifying key differences between the written laws of Uganda, its implementation or lack thereof, in terms of political, ethnical, racial, and religious divisions.

I also managed to get my French major to solidify my certificate in African studies; as learning the language at a proficiency level has opened many opportunities and understandings, not only in the African continent, but around the world. Since French was spoken around me since I was little, I was able to pick it up quite quick which allowed me to focus on reading and writing. It also provided me with the opportunity to learn Haitian Creole, a language heavily influenced by multiple parts of Africa.

My future plans are to continue to learn and work with the African continent in political and diplomatic affairs. I believe that Africa is key in the future of globalism and international affairs!



# Connect with Our Graduating Students

## **Karla Bonilla Portilla** Graduate

I'm from Southern California. I am a Master in Public and International Affairs (MPIA) candidate from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA). I completed my undergraduate studies at the University of California-Riverside, where I received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science/International Affairs and History.



I chose to pursue a certificate in African Studies after being tasked with studying South Africa in research for the U.S. State Department. The working group I was a part of spent two semesters studying violent protest in South Africa and identifying opportunities for a restorative justice approach. This research made me want to learn more about South Africa and the rest of the African continent.

Taking classes and completing research on different African nations and peoples benefited my GSPIA experience by adding depth to my understanding of concepts like human security and sustainable development. Creating presentations on China's BRI projects in Africa, the conflict in Tigray, and U.S. foreign assistance to South Africa greatly illustrated this for me. Additionally, reading works from African authors such as Chinua Achebe, Evelyn Amony, and Peace Medie also enriched my experience by bringing the cultural element to life. Furthermore, taking a course on Afro-Latinos in the U.S. helped me conceptualize the vastness of the African diaspora.

After graduation, I will be working as a Presidential Management Fellow at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. I hope to use my African Studies certificate in the future, perhaps as related to natural resource management. I am confident that the knowledge I gained through my African Studies certificate classes will aid me in doing so.

# Connect with Our Graduating Students

## Nicholas P. Clegg Graduate

I am from North Lima, Ohio, just a few minutes south of Youngstown, Ohio. I received a BA in Political Science from John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio, as well as a Juris Masters in American Legal Studies from Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA.



While at the University of Pittsburgh, I spent the past year obtaining a Master of Public Policy and Management. I was initially commissioned as an Ordinance officer before obtaining the military occupation skill as an Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) Officer shortly after promotion to First Lieutenant. After being selected for Captain, I became a Logistics Officer and taught at the University of Pittsburgh Army ROTC Department as an Assistant Professor of Military Science.

The most significant benefit that I received from the African Studies Certificate is that I was able to take Swahili 101 and 102 over the summer with Dr. Filipo Lubua. During this course, I had learned basic levels of the Swahili language and a few knowledgeable tips on Tanzanian culture. Last year the US Army selected me for the Foreign Area Officers (FAO) functional area (48J), concentrated on Sub-Saharan Africa. The FAO corps is expected to become cultural experts in their assigned regions through schooling and firsthand experience. After French language training starting in February, I will go to Africa to travel the continent for one year. Since Swahili is the most widely spread African language on the continent, I hope to put it to good use. After one year of cultural immersion, I will work in embassies throughout Africa and advise various policymakers or military leaders on African affairs.

# Connect with Our Graduating Students

## **Leila Fadel** Graduate



I am a candidate at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) for a Master's of International Development majoring in Human Security with an African Studies Certificate.

My interest in the region grew from my experience living in Lebanon. Though not a part of Africa, my Middle Eastern heritage led to an interest in North Africa and then the continent as a whole. I learned Arabic at a young age, and recently began learning French.

Unfortunately, I began my graduate school career at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, so I have yet to visit the continent but will hopefully do so soon. Summer 2021 I secured a remote internship with the UNDP Arab States regional hub. Much of the work I was given concerned North and East African states such as Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Somalia, and Djibouti.

The African Studies Certificate has allowed me to concentrate my courses and research on development issues in the region. During my studies, I focused my regional research on gender issues, energy and the environment, climate change policy, and human rights concerns. For my capstone project, I designed an agricultural water conservation project for Morocco. After graduation, I plan to pursue a career in foreign policy specifically related to development and human security with a focus on Africa and the Middle East.

# Connect with Our Graduating Students

## **Gifty Owusu-Tawiah** Graduate



I am a student in GSPIA. I am studying international development with a major in governance and international public management. I was born in Ghana but grew up in the metro Detroit area of Michigan.

My interest in African Studies stemmed mainly from my background, specifically wanting to learn more about the continent as a whole and not just my own country. I am particularly interested in the Sub-Saharan region. My course work at GSPIA made it particularly smooth to participate in the African Studies certificate. Many of my courses had an international focus area and I would have already naturally gravitated toward using these opportunities to learn more about Africa.

The most beneficial aspect of the certificate was being able to take a class outside of GSPIA. I took a class in the College of Education and it was truly amazing. I got to focus on the two key issues I am very passionate about: gender equality and education. Much of my research focused on gender equality on the continent. And while there has been much progress made, like the rest of the world there is still much to be done. I hope to continue to be part of this work.

This certificate certainly has given me much insight into the historic, political, and economic states of the continent. And while there is so much left to learn, I am bringing a wealth of knowledge with me as I leave my degree program. Currently, I am working for the Government Accountability Office and hope to continue my analyst position there in the future on the international affairs and trade team.



# Faculty Reports

## Thuy Bui



Associate Professor of Medicine Dr. Thuy Bui conducts research in Malawi. On her most recent trip in spring of 2022, she met Chief Theresa Kachindamoto and described her experience: Senior Chief Theresa Kachindamoto of the Dedza district in the central region of Malawi has been featured by many international news organizations and NGOs. She is known as the Terminator of child marriages.

Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with approximately 42% of girls married before the age of 18 and 9% below the age of 15 (UNICEF, 2019). Tradition, gender inequality, lack of education and poverty perpetuate child marriage. Chief Kachindamoto was given the gift of education by her father although as a young girl she resented being told that she had to go to school when this was not imposed on her 11 siblings. She attended Chancellor college and worked as a secretary for several years until 2003 when the chiefs of Dedza District chose her as the next senior chief, an honor bestowed on only a small number of Malawian women.

She remembered seeing young girls, 12 or 13 with babies on their backs. Initially she thought that the babies were their siblings. Even though Malawians in the village say this is our culture, she could not accept it. She could not believe what was happening. She gathered other chiefs, village seniors, pastors, school headmasters, policeman. She persuaded them that everyone had a role to play and that they could change the problem of child marriage. She said that the girls needed to go back to school and she convinced their parents to care for the grandchildren while the girls attended school.

# Faculty Reports

She has a network of “secret mothers” who would inform her of young girls who were married in the villages and serve as their mentors.

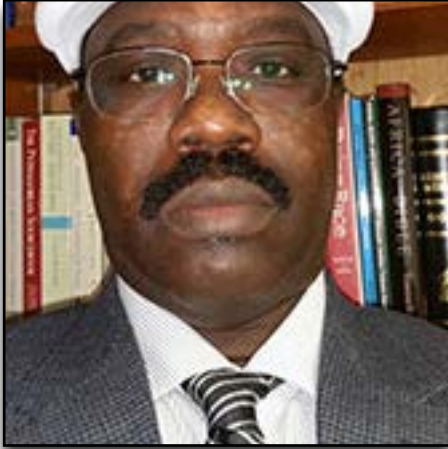
Senior Chief Kachindamoto is known to fire some chiefs who refused to condemn this practice. In 2017 the Malawi government formalized legislation to make marriage under age 18 illegal. The practice went underground, and some girls are still forced into marriage by pregnancy.

This trip, encouraged by Dr. Martina Anto-Ocrah, I was determined to seek out our hero, Chief Kachindamoto in Nkatakata, Malawi. I am curious to know how she was able to change culture and tradition. Chipi, a good friend with innumerable talents, served as my cultural guide. It was a 3-hour drive to Nkatakata from Lilongwe with frequent stops to ask for direction once we are near. Needless to say, her home is not on Google maps. Chipi and I were captive by her gentle storytelling, wisdom and humor. We painfully learned that during COVID-19 pandemic, with lock down, hunger and school closing, a few cases of child marriage did occur in her area but she and her mother network made sure that it would not happen again. She would like to see the young women who completed secondary school get trained in technical work so that they could be self-employed and independent. Many skilled jobs like tailoring, welding, carpentry, electronics repair, are not opened to women in rural Malawi. She remains committed to see that young girls are educated and that more opportunities are open to young women so that they can pursue their hope and dream. Her dream is to have college scholarships and job-training centers to empower girls to fulfill their potential.

“Even when child marriage is eradicated, it is only the beginning of the struggle for gender equity. We departed with the understanding that much more work needs to be done.”

# Faculty Reports

## BioDun Ogundayo



Dr. BioDun Ogundayo, associate professor of French and comparative literature at Pitt Bradford, has received a prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award to study, teach, and research in BurkinaFaso! Congratulations, Dr. Ogundayo!

Dr. Ogundayo is the director of the Africana Studies and foreign language departments at Pitt Bradford.

He will spend the 2022-2023 academic year teaching at the Department of Anglophone Studies at the Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo in Ouagadougou. “I will be bringing a relevant and specifically American cultural, academic and cross-cultural input and perspective to their curriculum,” Dr. Ogundayo says. He hopes to connect his Pitt-Bradford students with his new students in Burkina Faso through Zoom as well.

“We are like bridges,” he says of scholars in the Fulbright program. “People like me are playing a tiny role to explain America to people of this region and explain these West African people to Americans.”

When not teaching, Dr. Ogundayo plans to conduct research on how the oral traditions of the dominant ethnic group, the Mossi, shape Burkinabe attitudes, conversations and responses to the challenges of Islamist fundamentalism and violence facing the country.

“The Mossi of Burkina Faso have a rich spiritual tradition,” says Dr. Ogundayo, who plans to use the resources of Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo and interviews with colleagues and other local Burkinabè to increase understanding between American and African scholars.

# Faculty Reports

## Josef Werne



Dr. Josef Werne, Professor of Geology and Environmental Science, has several projects in Africa. His PhD student, Evan Collins, is working on a study in Lake Magadi and Lake Nasikie Engida, in Kenya. This study is using organic and stable isotope geochemistry to investigate changing environmental conditions in these lakes through time, as it is reflected in the microbial communities of these two lakes.

Dr. Werne has a long-term collaborative project in Lake Malawi in East Africa, including researchers from the USA, Canada, and Malawi. They recently had a workshop with this group to discuss results from a study in which they collected samples in “sediment traps”, which are essentially funnels that catch things that sink through the water column. They can study this material to understand the biogeochemistry and ecology of the lake system, and how landscape use changes have affected the lake. For example, they observe that land use change, including clearing forests to plant corn, have lead to an increase in soil inputs to the lake, affecting nutrient cycling and phytoplankton ecology in the lake. Given that local populations depend on Lake Malawi fisheries for up to 70% of their dietary protein, this is a critical ecosystem service that must be monitored. Based on their workshop, they anticipate generating several manuscripts for a “special issue” in the Journal of Great Lakes Research in the coming year.

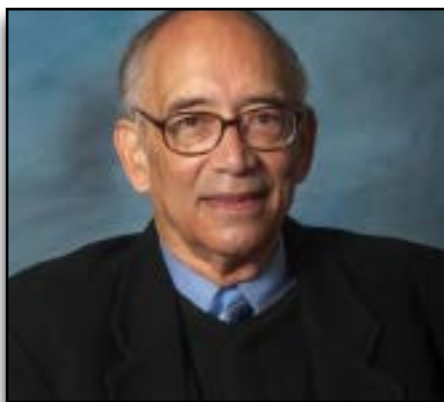
Dr. Werne is also working on a project from Gabu Lake, Nigeria, with Dr. Inyang Oyo-Ita to study impacts of barite mining and salt deposition on organic matter preservation in sediments of the lake.

In September, he will be hosting Dr. Nizar Ouertani from Tunisia, who will be spending a year at Pitt with support from Fulbright. They will be developing a record of paleoclimate and environmental change from the sediments of Lake Ichkeul and Bizerte Lagoon in northern Tunisia.



# Faculty Reports

## Laurence Glasco



Dr. Laurence Glasco, Associate Professor of History, has focused on black history in Pittsburgh and globally since coming to Pitt in 1969. This year, he taught the History of Black Pittsburgh, Human Rights in World History, and Race, Class, & Ethnicity in Global Perspective. He has studied the history of Black Pittsburgh over the past 20 years.

Dr. Glasco was interviewed by Lynn Hayes Freeland on KDKA regarding Black Pittsburgh and racial justice, and was interviewed by WQED and Pennsylvania Cable Network on August Wilson and K. Leroy Irvis. Dr. Glasco was one of the main speakers during the city's Juneteenth celebration.

Next spring, he will give talks on August Wilson at the University of North Carolina and at the American Literature Association's annual conference in Chicago. Dr. Glasco worked with Carl Kurlander and Studio Zewde to create, and appeared in, a documentary on the history of the Hill District and August Wilson's home. Currently, Dr. Glasco is working on a book with Professor Joe Trotter of Carnegie Mellon University on the history of Black Pittsburgh.

Professor Glasco serves on the board of Directors of the Heinz History Center and of the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. He donated \$10,000 to the Heinz History Center to establish the Esther Glasco Williams Internship to honor his late sister and to support the expansion of the Heinz History Center's Black footprint. He is on the advisory board of the August Wilson House.

# Faculty Reports

## Social Work Professors Travel to Uganda and Kenya



This year, Associate Director Dr. Macrina Lelei traveled on our East African Field-Based Program to Uganda and Kenya with three faculty members from the School of Social Work, Dr. Yodit Betru, Master of Social Work (MSW) program director, Dr. Toya Jones, Bachelor of Social Work (BASW) program director, and Dr. Tonya Slawinski, Field Director. This was a three-week trip to explore options for student internships and study abroad.

A strategic goal for the School of Social Work is to expand global offerings in the curriculum and enhance student experiences. As a first step, the professors and African Studies executed a capacity-building project to explore the opportunities for partnerships with universities in Uganda and Kenya. This was aimed at fulfilling the School's coursework and field requirements and facilitating a potential exchange of students and faculty, and global learning.

The professors participated in the orientation and site visits to different institutions to explore options for students. They visited universities that already have established social work programs like Uganda Christian University, and in Kenya visited Moi University in Eldoret and the University of Nairobi.

# Welcoming New Africanist Scholars!

**The Center for African Studies is excited to welcome five new Africanist scholars across various disciplines to the University of Pittsburgh this academic year!**



Dela Kuma will join the Anthropology Department. Ms. Kuma specializes in African archaeology, the archaeology of 'legitimate' trade, and the archaeology of the Atlantic world. Her dissertation examines broad transformations in local taste practices and everyday life during the 19th century "legitimate" trade in the hinterlands of southeastern Ghana.

Dr. Astou Fall Gueye joins the French and Italian Department this fall as an Assistant Professor of French. Dr. Gueye's research focuses on feminist aesthetics and diasporic subjecthood. Her dissertation examines the intersections of gender, language, and sexuality in diasporic interpretations and performances of jongé, a set of embodied and discursive practices revolving around womanhood, femininity, and sexuality in Senegal.



# Welcoming New Africanist Scholars!



Dr. Meshesha Jobo will be joining the University Center for International Studies and the Less-Commonly Taught Languages Center in the fall from Wolaita Sodo University in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to teach Amharic. Dr. Jobo holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of South Africa. He is an Associate Professor of English at Wolaita Sodo University, where he has worked for 11 years.

Dr. Steven T. Goldstein joins the Anthropology Department in January 2023 as an Assistant Professor. He is an anthropological archaeologist, and currently a Research Group Leader at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany. His research is focused on Eastern Africa, where he investigates the complex relationship between people and their environments over the last 12,000 years.



Dr. Ian Copeland joins the Music Department as a postdoctoral fellow. Dr. Copeland holds a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from Harvard University. His dissertation, “Sonic Humanitarianism: Musical Aid in Malawi” focuses on who benefits from humanitarian projects that utilize musical strategies.



# Events and Activities



The Center for African Studies hosts events to engage students in learning outside the classroom and encourage discourse about a range of topics and themes. This academic year, we hosted a combination of in-person and virtual events. We were especially thrilled to resume our East Africa Program for graduate students in Kenya and Uganda (pictured above).

Notable events we coordinated and sponsored with support from other units across the University include the following:

The East Africa Field-Based Program

Let's Talk Africa Series

Model African Union for College and High School Students

K-12 School Visits

# Let's Talk Africa



The Let's Talk Africa series offers a forum for discussion about current issues in Africa including its development, opportunities, and challenges. Speakers include faculty, staff, students, and practitioners to share research on topics of interest.

We hosted visiting lecturer Dr. Gamby Camara, Ph.D., who spoke about his research on the connections between Harlem's New Negro Movement and Paris' Negritude movement. Dr. Camara discussed how these histories have influenced modern filmmakers of African descent, including Ryan Coogler and Ava DuVernay, and the ways they use art for social change.

With the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, we also hosted Angel Maxine, who is proud to call herself Ghana's first openly transgender musician. She talked to the Pitt community about what it was like growing up trans in Ghana, the current sociopolitical situation for LGBTQA people in the country, and how she uses music to resist oppression. Maxine's presentation, which was virtual, generated many questions from participants from all over Pittsburgh and Ghana.



# East Africa Field-Based Program

The East Africa Field-Based program is a multidisciplinary field-based learning, research and internship program in Uganda and Kenya designed to allow graduate students from the professional schools the chance to apply academic knowledge and theory to practice in real-world situations. Students have the opportunity to go into the field and try on a particular professional role in public or community service. 6 students



and the program faculty director Professor Louis A. Picard travelled to Uganda for orientation in Entebbe (May 11-16, 2022).

After orientation, the students dispersed for their internship and research projects (May 18–June 30, 2022). The students were paired with non-governmental organizations working in areas of international development, public health, social welfare, and education. Students developed intercultural and leadership skills while learning firsthand how local experts address issues facing their communities. All program related activities were carried out with the cooperation of ASA Social Fund for Hidden Peoples and the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA). Students also participated in research in areas of their interests including development, social work, and education.

Our broader mission is to advance the international and global experiences of students and further their cultural capital, learning about places and cultures, and gaining intercultural skills in the process. This aligns with Pitt's Global Plan that proposes a strategic approach to international partnerships, encourages concerted decision-making that leads to transformational action, and guides Pitt toward real-world impact.

# Model African Union for College Students



This year's annual Model African Union, hosted by Howard University, took place from February 24th - 27th, 2022. The conference was virtual due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Model African Union provides students with an opportunity to study the role, structures, activities, and issues faced by the African Union and they roleplay as delegates from specific African countries. This year, 9 Pitt students represented Burundi. They improved their skills in research and debate, worked with teams from other university teams to write resolutions, and look forward to participating in next year's Model African Union - hopefully in person.



# Model African Union for High School Students



On Wednesday, March 23rd, we hosted our 9th annual Model African Union Conference, which was held virtually. 48 students took part, including students from Dakhalia Stem School in Egypt! The students and their teachers participated in a simulation of the African Union. For the simulation, students roleplay as delegates from

specific African countries. They discuss the agenda issues, split into assigned sub-committees, and work together to agree on resolutions to common problems. The issues on the agenda this year were Public Health and Fighting Covid-19 and the subcommittees were Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights; Economic Matters; and Social Matters.

Prior to the conference, students researched the country assigned to them and outlined positions on the issues, prepared talking points, and wrote position papers. At the MAU conference, students negotiated, proposed resolutions and amendments, and voted for solutions.

The MAU helps students hone their research, debate, and negotiation skills, and gain knowledge and understanding about Africa. The MAU enables cultural exchange and networking and students emerge more globally competent.



# K-12 School Visits

## Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA)

Joyce Mutsoli, a secondary school teacher from Kenya, served as our Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) for Swahili. The FLTA Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, develops Americans' knowledge of foreign cultures and languages by supporting teaching assistantships at U.S. institutions of higher education. The program gives educators from over 50 countries the chance to develop their professional skills and learn about U.S. culture and its people. As our FLTA, Joyce held conversation hours for students taking Swahili and she visited K-12 schools.



Throughout the academic year, Joyce she shared her experience and knowledge of Africa with 800 K-12 students. These photos are of Joyce's visit to Oakland Catholic High School, where she presented to students on the cultural importance of African dress and fashion.

Joyce's visit to Imani Christian Academy was during Black History Month. Joyce presented on the structure, advantages, and disadvantages of the education system in Kenya to give students a more balanced perspective of Kenyan education than stereotypes of Africa typically provide.



# Looking Ahead and Appreciation



## Our Mission

The Center for African Studies at the University of Pittsburgh promotes the interdisciplinary study of Africa through high quality education about Africa and the African Diaspora. We strive to provide a rich learning environment that facilitates a comprehensive and critical understanding of the continent through Africa-related courses, African languages, research, and beyond-the-classroom activities designed to help students grasp Africa's internal dynamics and evolving places on the world stage as they prepare for their leadership and services roles in a global society.

## A Note of Thanks

With deep appreciation, we thank all CAS affiliated faculty for their active participation in advancing the mission of the Center for African Studies. They are the key to making the program successful through their teaching, research, mentoring, and service to the community. We also wish to express appreciation for our students, for their interest in African Studies and for their desire to become agents of change. We hope their academic experience within our Center will have a lasting impact on their lives. A big thank you to our staff who work tirelessly to ensure that we are successful at what we do.



**CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES**