

Eight Student Journalists Complete AY 2023-2024 HBCU-Africa Correspondents Corps Program

(Washington, DC, USA, July 5, 2024) - The Center for African Studies at Howard University is pleased to announce that eight student journalists have successfully completed the minimum requirements for the HBCU-Africa Correspondents Corps (HBCU-ACC) Program:

- Akofa Bruce (President of the HBCU-ACC): Howard University, United States;
- Aurelia Mouton (Vice President of the HBCU-ACC): Stellenbosch University, South Africa;
- Mfundo Msimango (Secretary of the HBCU-ACC): Pennsylvania State University, United States;
- Mya Hall - Howard University, United States;
- Enzo Sabela - Durban University of Technology, South Africa;
- Babajide Tella - Howard University, United States;
- Nkululeko Ndlovu - Stellenbosch University, South Africa;
- Tatiana Allen - Howard University, United States.

To fulfill these requirements, the students completed the following courses offered through the HBCU-ACC Program:

- Akofa Bruce (President of the HBCU-ACC): International Journalism and Structured Analytic Techniques;
- Aurelia Mouton (Vice President of the HBCU-ACC): Expert Commentary, Global Public Relations, and Structured Analytic Techniques;
- Mfundo Msimango (Secretary of the HBCU-ACC): Expert Commentary and Structured Analytic Techniques;
- Mya Hall - International Journalism and Structured Analytic Techniques;
- Enzo Sabela - International Journalism and Structured Analytic Techniques;
- Babajide Tella - International Journalism and Structured Analytic Techniques;
- Nkululeko Ndlovu - International Journalism and Structured Analytic Techniques;
- Tatiana Allen - International Journalism and Structured Analytic Techniques.

At the conclusion of the program, a couple of students received awards in recognition of the caliber of their work throughout the program:

- Akofa Bruce - Correspondent of the Year;
- Enzo Sabela - South African Correspondent of the Year.

Meanwhile, two other students received awards in recognition of the quality of their work in individual courses:

- Mya Hall - Report of the Year;
- Aurelia Mouton - Podcast of the Year.

Reflecting on their participation in the program, the students shared the following remarks:

- **Akofa Bruce (President of the HBCU-ACC):** “The experience I gained as a member of the HBCU-ACC will forever be an integral steppingstone in my professional career. When I joined this initiative, I did not anticipate how much growth it would bring out of me as I learned from my advisor and worked with my peers. I approached this endeavor as I would any other, with my strong ambition for education and a willingness to learn. My determination was noticed, and I was selected to serve as the President of the 2023-2024 cohort. This presidency required diligence, time management and open communication and I delivered to the best of my ability alongside my fellow officers. Serving as President and being a correspondent meant maintaining my responsibilities when it came to leadership, as well as being proactive to ensure I advanced my skills throughout the program. Competencies such as fairness and adaptability in journalism have become more than familiar to me as I interacted with different articles, reporters, and story ideas. I have improved my professional writing by studying AP style. I also gained proficiency in analytic journalism which supported my international reporting and commentary. Along with conducting support work for the global public relations course, I managed our correspondence with multiple journalists and experts that imparted their wisdom to our cohort. My newfound skills in news gathering, interpreting data, conducting interviews, and utilizing beat notes helped me better understand the fundamentals of storytelling and contributed to my forthcoming reporting project on the Kenyan protests in DC happening in response to the proposed 2024 finance bill. Being awarded Correspondent of the Year and having the chance to hone my writing, photography, speaking and decision-making skills has made me more eager to explore what I can do with more guidance and resources.”
- **Aurelia Mouton (Vice President of the HBCU-ACC):** “The HBCU-ACC program has provided me with the confidence and competence to identify relevant opportunities, use my growing professional network in a meaningful way, and present myself and my work with finesse. Throughout the program we were challenged to confront any insecurity and uncertainty about our work and to, instead, improve on those areas we felt needed bettering. As the Vice-President, I had the additional opportunity of promoting and advising the South African students. This was an honor for me, and I am sure I will make use of this leadership experience going forward. The practical skills we gained and the contacts within the industry that we made are incredibly valuable. They will serve each student well in future endeavors and job applications. I cannot think of a better career launch for young journalists, commentators, and communications professionals.”
- **Mfundo Msimango (Secretary of the HBCU-ACC):** “The HBCU-ACC was a challenging yet rewarding experience. We had to complete assignments that forced us to learn new skills, and in turn contributed to our professional growth. Furthermore, we were fortunate to engage with prominent journalists, editors, and politicians all of whom have since become integral to our professional network. Consequently, I feel inspired and prepared by the HBCU-ACC program to pursue a meaningful career as a political commentator, and I am excited to use what I have learned to make a positive impact in the world.”

- **Enzo Sabela:** “The HBCU-ACC program has taught me a lot about journalism and political reporting. The knowledge I got from this program is knowledge that I will take with me throughout my career. It has given me a chance to work with some of the best up and coming journalists in Africa and the United States. Gaining knowledge from some of the most reputable and experienced journalists in the world has been an invaluable experience. I am extremely grateful to Howard University and Mr. Walsh”
- **Mya Hall:** “Being a correspondent for the HBCU-ACC has indubitably set me on the path to becoming a respected journalist. Through this program, I have expanded my journalistic skill set to include considering ethical principles, implementing effective interviewing strategies, writing using AP-style, and crafting well-structured, compelling narratives. Moreover, I have learned that engaging stories require extensive background work and a deep understanding of the audience. My work demonstrates significant growth as I exercised these newfound skills to create weekly beat notes and produce my final report on the updated hairstyle policy in Guyana. Furthermore, to have been awarded Report of the Year is a testament to my hard work and potential for further growth. Ultimately, the HBCU-ACC has shown me the importance of having diversity in the newsroom. The lived experiences and cultural ties that people of color and minorities, like myself, bring to our communities make us the best individuals to share these narratives to the world.”
- **Babajide Tella:** “I feel privileged to be part of the 2024 cohort of the HBCU-ACC. I was exposed to the fundamentals of international journalism and gained a broader perspective on reporting global events in a way that promotes understanding between cultures. I also benefited tremendously from the wealth of experience of the program director, Michael Walsh, and the various distinguished guest speakers and esteemed colleagues. I look forward to deploying the knowledge that I garnered to advance the journalism profession.”
- **Nkululeko Ndlovu:** “The HBCU-ACC program has arguably been the most informative and rewarding academic experience of my time at university. There are two important takeaways. The first is the skill of strategic and analytic techniques. This method has helped me produce stronger articles, better ideas, and higher levels of success. The second is the combined skill of presentation and connecting. The way you present a pitch for an article is the first step to success. From this follows connections. As a journalist, your power is not only a pen but the audience and resources you bring to your publication. Connections are as important as breathing in the current media landscape.”
- **Tatiana Allen:** “My time spent in the HBCU-ACC was one full of appreciation for every challenge that I faced and the guidance that I received from Michael Walsh. I already had a passion for the field, being a journalism major, but this program opened up doors that a classroom alone couldn’t offer me. There were moments that I didn’t know where to go, how to start, or how I could leverage myself as a journalist, and relying on the community of my classmates who had more experience made this program rewarding in the end. This program allowed me to do research and conduct interviews on a topic and in a country that I wasn’t an expert on five months ago. Now I can boldly say that being in the country, speaking with others, and getting to know the history showed me how important my topic was. It has made me open-minded to governmental issues outside of the U.S. and given me an appreciation for those doing the unspoken work that often doesn’t get a thank you.

I am walking away with an expanded network of contacts, valuable knowledge, an updated resume, and a community of young professionals like myself.”

The program director of the HBCU-ACC, Michael Walsh, shared the following remarks about this year’s cohort and what they accomplished:

- **Michael Walsh (HBCU-ACC Advisor):** “This year’s cohort of the HBCU-ACC was special. We had our largest group of guest speakers in history. We also had multiple correspondents receive media coverage of their accomplishments. None of this would have been possible without the leadership of Akofa Bruce, Aurelia Mouton, and Mfundo Msimango. As officers, they served with distinction to the credit of their respective universities. It is with mixed emotions that this year’s program has reached its end. It is clear that some of our student journalists are on the verge of major career breakthroughs, and I can’t wait to see them making headlines in the near future. Just today, I was working with one of our correspondents who is finalizing freelance articles for two of the biggest news outlets in South Africa. As the student journalists will attest, the HBCU-ACC is not an easy program to complete. It not only requires a lot of coursework. It also forces student journalists out of their comfort zone. This is not an academic program, it is professional development. We are preparing our correspondents to succeed in the workforce. Given the current state of journalism, that can be challenging. It means that the students need to be more competitive than ever before.”

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