

Six South African Students Complete Professional Development Courses at Howard University

(Washington, DC, USA, July 5, 2024) - The Center for African Studies at Howard University is pleased to announce that the six student journalists from South Africa have successfully completed the minimum requirements for the following professional development courses:

- Salient Aminu - Global Public Relations;
- Thuto Kgosiemang - Expert Commentary;
- Thato Makwela - Global Public Relations;
- Ezra Mendel- Expert Commentary;
- Thandolwethu Shisa - Global Public Relations;
- Tasneem Vania- Global Public Relations.

To fulfill these requirements, the students had to meet exactly the same course completion requirements as the participants in the HBCU-Africa Correspondents Corps (HBCU-ACC) Program.

At the conclusion of the program, two of the students received awards in recognition of the quality of their assignments:

- Salient Aminu - Press Release of the Year (Program Category);
- Thato Makwela - Press Release of the Year (Person Category).

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

- Salient Aminu: "Participating in the HBCU-ACC program has been an exciting experience. The global public relations course has helped me become more confident using my voice to explore the complexities of the world. Meeting editors and bureau chiefs online from prestigious publications made me realize journalism is about empathizing with your audience and using reporting to drive meaningful change. One of my biggest goals is to work for the UN or its affiliated organizations as a communications analyst or external relations specialist. In this role, I would track trends, identify issues and perceptions, and help craft strategic messaging to address challenges. This program has opened my eyes to the power of journalism and communications to be a force for good in the world".
- Thuto Kgosiemang: "My experience with the HBCU-ACC program was incredibly rewarding as an International Relations and Politics student. Engaging with the lecturer, fellow students, and guest speakers provided valuable insights into the professional world relevant to our courses. One standout moment was during the first week when we participated in a class exercise that underscored the critical skill of distinguishing between fact and opinion. As I aspire to pursue a career as a political commentator/analyst, this lesson resonates deeply with me. I am committed to ensuring that my expertise and analyses are grounded in thorough, factual research."

- Thato Makwela: “As a participant in the HBCU-Africa Correspondents Corps Summer Program, I gained invaluable insights into international relations in the world of media and journalism. The program opened doors by connecting me with influential professionals and exposing me to diverse perspectives. Motivated by my passion for global affairs, I immersed myself in rigorous coursework, engaged in cross-cultural dialogues, and honed my journalistic skills. I definitely feel like I have stepped into a new version of myself that I had long forgotten. The guidance and support I received from Akofa, Michael and my classmates was invaluable, and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to have been a part of the program. Looking ahead, I aspire to leverage this experience to contribute meaningfully to media organizations, fostering understanding and promoting positive change on a global scale.”
- Thandolwethu Shisa: “Participating in the HBCU-Africa Correspondents Corps Summer Program was driven by my passion for political commentary, diplomacy, and global public relations. This program has been transformative, offering an opportunity to engage with experienced professionals, refine my skills, and build a diverse, global network. I have gained a deep understanding of media landscapes, the nuances of intercultural communication, and the strategic role of global public relations in diplomacy. Moving forward, I am committed to leveraging these experiences to pursue a career as an international foreign affairs correspondent and political commentator/analyst, dedicated to fostering global understanding and contributing to the discourse on international relations.”
- Tasneem Vania: “As an international relations student, I am always interested in expanding my knowledge base. This course, in particular, has offered me an insightful and alternative perspective by looking at the world through the lens of global public relations. I have become acutely more aware of how the media shapes our view of the world. As I progress in my career, I am certain that the skills I have gained will continue to have a positive impact. I am incredibly grateful to all those who have been a part of this journey”.

The student president of the HBCU-ACC, Akofa Bruce, student vice president of the HBCU-ACC, and program director of the HBCU-ACC, Michael Walsh, added:

- Akofa Bruce (HBCU-ACC President) - “Inspiring is the word that comes to mind when I reflect on my collaboration with the students from Wits University. Working one on one with each of them meant that I experienced their professionalism, curiosity, and diligence. Each of them wasted no time diving into our challenging coursework. Although all of us are students, each of them reminded us that we shouldn’t be scared to be beginners. They taught our cohort to face new tasks with confidence in our abilities. They all have the potential and determination needed to thrive in the workforce.”
- Michael Walsh (HBCU-ACC Advisor and Course Instructor) - “This is the first year that we have invited students from the University of Witwatersrand to participate in the summer courses of the HBCU-Africa Correspondents Corps. Working alongside the HBCU-ACC Correspondents, these students not only completed the basic requirements for the HBCU-ACC Program. They also met the individual course requirements for either Expert Commentary or Global Public Relations. To do so, each of the students had to produce a set of real-world deliverables on current events. These included publication-ready blog

posts, press releases, opinion editorials, and podcasts. The Wits students rose to this challenge. By the end of the course, they produced all of the deliverables that were asked of them. This is not only a testament to the quality of the South African tertiary education system. It is also a reflection on their character and potential.”

Note, this year's HBCU-ACC Program was sponsored by Hyundai and Mitsubishi Heavy.

Point of Contact

Ania Ueno
Communications and Media Manager
Center for African Studies
Howard University
ania.ueno@howard.edu