

Ebenezer Ansah is the Inaugural Recipient of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Award for African Students



The African Studies Center at Michigan State University is delighted to announce two important and related developments; the inauguration of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Award, and the announcement of its first recipient, doctoral candidate Ebenezer Offei Ansah. The award honors former Nigerian President Nnamdi Azikiwe, a scholar and politician who led Nigeria as its first civilian president. The award provides support for African students who otherwise have minimal sources for support as most funds are available for citizens and permanent residents of the USA.

President Azikiwe invited MSU faculty to join him and other Nigerians to build a land-grant model university in Eastern Nigeria in 1962. This became the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, which has since built a distinguished reputation and legacy of excellence in higher education. In turn, MSU's presence in Africa has expanded exponentially since the early 1960's. The African Studies Center's 100 core faculty members span many colleges and departments at MSU. They conduct research, teach and do outreach work in almost all African countries. The Award recognizes and memorializes the significance of this groundbreaking and historic collaboration that took place between MSU and the government of Nigeria shortly after Nigeria's independence in 1960, and the progress that has since been made with the expansion of MSU's work across the continent.

The Inaugural recipient of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Award, is Ebenezer Offei Ansah. Eben, as he is commonly known, is a most befitting winner of this prestigious award. His work on sustainable food systems and agriculture is Africa-centered. He is interested in how Sustainability

Certification Programs can be used to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Ghana. While studying at MSU, Eben has maintained strong ties with key agricultural institutions in Ghana. He has held two internships with the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana and with the National Development Planning Commission. These engagements have given Eben the opportunity to give back to his country, and will help prepare him for his return to Ghana after the completion of his doctoral studies at MSU.

Eben's endeavor to contribute to Ghana's development and to the transformation of Africa, and his commitment to giving back to the continent and its people, are in line with the values for which the Nnamdi Azikiwe Award was established. Eben's aspirations, accomplishments, and activities exemplify and extend the spirit of President Azikiwe's work in Nigeria.

In addition, Eben has been a model citizen of the MSU community. He has made significant contributions to the programs and mission of the African Studies Center. Although Eben has been in Ghana for the past year, his absence from East Lansing can hardly be felt as he has remained connected to the African Studies Center, participating virtually in our Tea Times as a convener and as a presenter, and supporting consistently, the Center's social media outreach and publicity efforts. Please join us in congratulating the inaugural recipient of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Award, Ebenezer "Eben" Offei Ansah.

Visit the [Financial Support and Applications](#) page to find out more about the Azikiwe Award and how to apply.

The Roger Meece Awards

Congratulations also to graduate student **Caitlin Baker** and undergraduate students **Lucinda Krieger**, **Jocelyn Polanek**, and **Triniti Watson** for winning Meece Paper Prizes.



Caitlin Baker is a doctoral student in the Department of History, College of Social Science



Lucinda Kriger is an undergraduate student in the Department of Marketing, Eli Broad College of Business



Jocelyn Polanek is an undergraduate majoring in Integrative Biology, College of Natural Science



Triniti Watson is an undergraduate student with a major in Interdisciplinary Humanities and a minor in African & African American Studies, College of Arts and Letters

The Meece Graduate and Undergraduate Paper Prizes encourage excellence in African Studies at MSU and honors Mr. Roger Meece, an alumnus of Michigan State University and a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service who spent most of his career in Africa.

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