International Education Alternatives for African Diasporan Students in a Post-Covid World

Thursday 8 October, 2020

The education industry, like the majority of industries in the world, has been greatly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. This period has been particularly difficult for international students including those from Africa, pursuing degrees at US institutions, whose immigration, visa status, and educational programs have been left in limbo. In July 2020, the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced its decision to deport students who were in the country for educational purposes but unable to attend in-person classes since most universities had switched to online learning.

After considerable backlash and criticism, the directive to strip international college students of their visas, and eventually get deported if they didn't attend classes in person was rescinded.

A July 2020 New York Times report stated that the deportation of over one million international students could have cost universities millions of dollars in tuition, and jeopardized the ability of U.S companies to hire the highly skilled workers who often start their careers with American education.

"For many years obtaining a degree at an institution of higher learning in the United States has been the global "gold standard" for education. However, during the pandemic, the appeal of studying in the US has lessened for many African students due to issues related to racial and social unrest, immigration and visa status, and inability to travel due to closed borders. Webster University's Ghana Campus has provided a well-received alternative for many students and their families who desire an undergraduate or graduate degree from an accredited US university at the convenience and comfort of being at home in West Africa," says **Christa Sanders Bobtoya, the Director of Webster University Ghana**. Sanders-Bobtoya has traveled extensively across five continents, spanning 65 countries, dedicating her career to the field of higher education while managing study abroad programs as well as international branch campuses of US institutions in both Europe and Africa.

Webster University Ghana is the only international campus of Webster University on the African continent to offer US-accredited graduate and undergraduate degrees. The thriving liberal arts institution is accredited by the **National Accreditation Board of Ghana** and the **Higher Learning Commission (HLC)** in the United States. All Webster University students receive a degree issued from the US and, regardless of specific degree area, following the same curriculum worldwide. The home campus in St. Louis, Missouri, which issues the degrees, has an impressive track record of 105 years of providing high-quality American education.

"Webster University students are exposed to new ways of thinking and benefit from the cultural diversity and enriching academic environment that strengthens their critical-thinking skills. Since opening our doors in 2014, we have enrolled both undergraduate and graduate students from over 25 different countries, spanning four continents including many from Africa and its Diaspora who later join Webster's elite network of over 157,000 alumni worldwide," adds Sanders-Bobtoya.

Webster University Ghana offers a practical, hands-on approach to learning with small class sizes that don't exceed 30 students per class. The campus boasts a growing number of undergraduate academic majors and on the graduate level, a Master's of Business Administration, MA in Human Resource Management as well as an MA in International Relations.

The University also offers students the unique opportunity to study abroad during their course of study for either an 8/9 nine-week term, semester, or an entire academic year at any of Webster University's international campuses that include Switzerland, Austria, The Netherlands, US, Thailand, China, Greece, the UK, and Uzbekistan.

"As we all are adjusting to a new normal especially in the field of education the pandemic has presented, it is imperative that students from the African Diaspora especially know that they have an alternative for obtaining a high-quality international education at Webster University Ghana. Our unique university experience provides an opportunity to enhance global academic partnerships and provide an avenue for Africans/Diasporans to collaborate on research and exchanges right here on the continent while on their journey of becoming global citizens," concludes Sanders-Bobtoya.

Webster University offers the flexibility of 5 enrollment intakes every year, allowing new students to begin their collegiate journey when it best suits them. Prospective students may apply at any time during the

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year and start in August, October, January, March, and May.

The Ghana Campus has a rotation of visiting faculty every few weeks to teach students in both the undergraduate and graduate programs and graduate classes are held in the evenings and weekends to allow working professionals to be able to continue to work while pursuing a higher degree.

For more information, visit www.webster.edu.gh

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