



Haiti Development Studies Center

Fall 2024 Sponsors' Activity Report

Dr. Robert H. Giles, University of Massachusetts Honors College

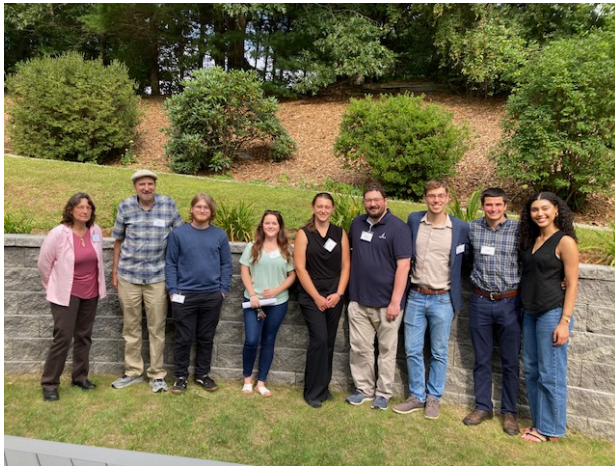


(Left Photo) At Ghana's Consulate in Worcester on Friday, April 5th, 2024, the Honorable Ken Asafo-Agjei welcomed UEW's Professor Richard Agjei to the U.S. recognizing U Mass Lowell's recently established academic research partnership with the University of Education Winneba (UEW). Also in attendance was UML-HDSC's Director Robert Giles and the African Community Center's Executive Director, Gordon Donkoh-Halm. *(Right Photo)* U Mass Lowell's Engineering Alum, Joshua Walsh provides Dr. Agjei a guided tour of the Clean Water Plant, Littleton, MA

HDSC – Our International Partnerships Grow in Africa

Growing our partnership with the University of Education Winneba in Ghana, UEW's Public Health Professor Dr. Richard Agjei visited U Mass Lowell during the week of April 8th. Giving lectures on "Energy in Africa" to faculty in the College of Engineering, and "HIV/AIDS prevention awareness research in Ghana" to the faculty in UML's School of Public Health. Dr. Agjei suggested several immediate collaborative research opportunities for our universities to explore. Discussions included ideas for establishing an academic program on the science and technology of global energy, as well as an Honors' Study Abroad Program focusing on "Energy Equity" and "Public Health Access in Ghana".

Prof. Richard Agjei visited Littleton's Clean Water Plant, where UML/HDSC Engineering Alum, Joshua Walsh, described the technology and his role working at the facility. Leveraging the long-standing work by HDSC's science and engineering faculty/student teams visiting Haiti over the last decade, the first online Honors' College Seminar on Global Energy is being live streamed during the Fall 2024 semester. Twenty students from UEW with 14 UML Honors students are attending the lectures where we are exploring the dynamics of internationally based science curriculum. Additional curriculum is being developed on the challenges of energy equity and public health access in Ghana as an Honors study abroad opportunity for the January 2025 winter semester. As his senior capstone research project, HDSC's intern Elliot Johnson has embraced the challenge of exploring the broader factors that hinder progress to the economic development of Ghana.



August 25th, 2024 UML-HDSC alums gather to celebrate a decade of capstone engineering projects designed to address potable water and energy equity issues in the impoverished country of Haiti. (Left Photo) From left to right are Cathy Pierce, Bob Giles, Jacob Cole, Kayla Doley, Maureen Hennig (Kelly), Andrew Cozzens, Evan Brown, Brendon Aylaian and Jennifer Paul. (Right Photo) Also in attendance at the celebration were Tom Taylor, Emeritus Dean of Students, and Jenifer Whitten-Woodring, Dean of the Honors College.

The Current Activities – Building New Partnerships in Africa

On Sunday, August 25th, UMass Lowell HDSC alums gathered to swap stories and celebrate their participation in a decade of senior capstone engineering projects in Haiti. Designed to address potable water and energy equity issues in impoverished communities, the alums gathered represented just a fraction of the more than fifty students that have travelled with HDSC's program. While the growing gang violence in Haiti has precluded our in-country travel, the online academic partnership with UPSAC's Science of Education program in the Southern Department of Haiti has been an invaluable partner for our on-going international academic programs and research projects. Over this past summer nine of UPSAC's students were acknowledged for their participation in HDSC's 2023 AY online "Science of Energy" lecture/lab seminar. HDSC's leadership is exploring the establishment of a similar partnership with the American University of the Caribbean in Les Cayes, Haiti.

Committed to our academic partnership with the Université Publique du Sud Aux Cayes (UPSAC) in Laborde, Haiti; HDSC Intern Jenifer Paul is reaching out to our academic partner to explore the development of an AI tool as an educational aid. As a clinical psychology student, Jennifer will be enabling teachers and students to use ChatGPT for guided writing exercises, self-expression, and conversations that encourage reflection, emotional regulation, and understanding of the everyday challenges people face living in impoverished international communities.

It is with great pleasure we congratulate, Jennifer Paul, on receiving HDSC's 2024 scholarship in recognition of her work with the center both in Haiti as well as with UEW in Ghana. With deep gratitude, the HDSC members recognize her tireless commitment as an HDSC undergraduate intern over this past year and look forward to her capstone research with Professor Steve Balsis as her Honors' Thesis Advisor.

Tahina Pierre served as an undergraduate intern at UML's Haiti Development Studies Center over this past summer. During this experience, she embraced the challenge of working with the immigrant population at Lowell's *ACE Center for New Americans*. Recognizing the need for better resources toward effectively assimilating these people in a new country, Tahina has decided to remain working at ACE and develop her honors project on investigating the needs and methods for establishing a program to address this population in the community. Ms. Pierre's final project is not just an academic exercise but will also be an effective template for non-profit organizations faced with the ongoing challenge of serving these new Americans.

Making a Difference Together

Serving as a model international academic framework, UML researchers seek partnerships with philanthropic foundations for supporting the Haiti Development Study Center and are grateful for its growing base of sponsors. By providing scholarships and operational support for HDSC programs, these partnerships strengthen our commitment to impoverished international communities using research, technology and education to make a lasting difference. The HDSC is an academic engine, small, but powerful enough to work in both directions; sharpening the research skills of UMass Lowell students and raising their awareness about factors that hinder progress in impoverished countries, while also helping international students get the education they need to move their country forward.



As an expanding circle of friends, Professor Giles gathers with UEW's Faculty of Science on stage after his July 2023 address on the challenges of "Energy and the Developing World".



(left photo) At HDSC's August celebration, ACCL's Gordon Halm, HDSC's Bob Giles and UML's CS Professor Emeritus Jesse Heines discuss plans for the January 2025 Honors' abroad trip to Winneba, Ghana. Jesse Heines has offered to travel with the study abroad team as the group's photographer! Depicted in the photo on the right are friends and alums of UML's HDSC, gathered at the Giles' residence on Sunday, April 7th to honor UEW's Dr. Richard Agjei visiting the US.

The University of Massachusetts Lowell, Haiti Development Studies Center



Committed toward the University of Massachusetts Lowell's mission to provide a transformational education that fosters student global awareness, the Haiti Development Studies Center recognizes Board of Advisors;

*Honors College Dean Jenifer Whitten-Woodring; Brian Corr, Executive Director, Cambridge Peace Commission; English Professor Dr. Keith Mitchel; Environmental Science Professor Lori Weeden; Psychology Professor Steve Balsis
Physics Professors Dr. Silas Laycock and Dr. Cecil Joseph; Mechanical Engineering Professor Chris Niezrecki*

A complete list of its advisors, participating faculty and sponsored activities available at

<https://www.uml.edu/research/hdsc/>

The University of Massachusetts Lowell is a public research university committed to excellence in teaching, research and community engagement. Our mission is to provide a transformational education that fosters student success, lifelong learning and global awareness. UMass Lowell offers affordable, experience-based undergraduate and graduate academic programs taught by internationally recognized faculty who conduct research to expand the horizons of knowledge.