

Lauder Africa Program News

The Lauder Institute is proud to offer the world's first premiere graduate business program with a concentration on Africa as part of its joint-degree program. Students complete the Wharton MBA and an MA in International Studies in a 24-month period. The Program includes a two-month immersion in Africa and coursework on the history, economy, politics, cultures and languages of several African countries.

The Lauder Institute welcomed its first Africa Program students in May 2016. Ten Wharton/Lauder students matriculated into the Program, and will graduate in 2018 with a MBA from Wharton and an MA from the School of Arts and Sciences after two years of study. In June 2016, students began a structured two-month immersion in Africa. The Lauder Summer Immersion Program in Africa included critical locations in East, West and Sub-Saharan African countries.

Mauro Guillén, Director of the Lauder Institute says, "This program, concentrating exclusively on the unique economic, social, health and environmental conditions in Africa, is incredibly timely. By 2050, Africa is likely to have 25 percent of the world's population and by the end of the century it is likely to have 35 percent of the world's population. We're delighted to offer our students the opportunity to make a difference there."

Summer Immersion 2016

The Summer Immersion explores political, economic, historic and institutional dimensions of Africa as a region. The academic program focuses on multiple perspectives to gain critical understanding of issues such as cultural, ethnic, and geographic diversity; trade and transnational agreements in the region; business practices; educational and socioeconomic inequalities; and environmental challenges.



Lauder students completed a rural homestay in Kenya to develop an understanding of rural life and issues impacting the region from a rural perspective.

Students learn from scholars as well as community and business leaders through a mix of lectures, group exercises, readings, corporate and non-corporate visits, and interactions with local communities. This combination of classroom learning and experiential activities, provides students with the opportunity to experience, synthesize, analyze, and evaluate a variety of pressing and timely topics.

Lauder students in this program come from a variety of backgrounds, but all have the same drive to be a part of the future of African business. Lauder student Julia Enyart says "As part of Lauder's inaugural Africa track, I am part of a group that recognizes the increased attention to a continent viewed as the next frontier for investment. As an international development professional who lived in Ghana and South Africa, I long ago became enamored by African businesses defined by energy, entrepreneurialism, and ingenuity. I am honored to have the chance to merge my passion for Africa and desire to work in social impact with Lauder and Wharton's renowned dual degree program."

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Tanty is a food processing company that was started in 2003 by still current CEO Thierry Nyamen. Lauder students in Cameroon pictured with buckets of soy porridge mix, a Tanty best-seller, visited a number of companies in a variety of industries.

Before her Lauder Summer Immersion, Lauder student Mona Kadouh stated: “Born in Liberia to a mother who was born and raised in Sierra Leone, Africa has had a significant essence in my upbringing. I am keen to explore possible entrepreneurship ventures in Africa this summer, mainly in technology start-ups.”

The group indeed explored Nairobi’s entrepreneurial spaces. Their visits included startups, co-working spaces, accelerators, incubators, and investment firms. Several students had the opportunity to work on a short term project with a Venture Capital firm-cum-accelerator that invests and supports local startups. This chance allowed students to immerse themselves into the tech network in Nairobi, and learn firsthand through the companies they worked with.

After the summer immersion, the students returned to Philadelphia to begin the MBA Program at Wharton and to continue coursework for the Lauder Program. The core includes specially-designed courses for the Lauder Program in International Political Economy, Global Economic History and Leadership and Intercultural Learning. Lauder students undertake field work in different parts of the world for capstone research projects known as Global Knowledge Lab (GKL). Students will also participate in week-long

academic immersions in locations such as Cuba, Israel, Thailand, Morocco or Zanzibar.

Admission to the Lauder Africa Program

All Lauder students must demonstrate advanced proficiency in at least one language other than English. For candidates in the Africa Program, we support instruction in several languages, such as Arabic and French. The University of Pennsylvania offers language instruction in Kiswahili and other African languages. This year, our Africa Program includes an Anglophone group (students having met the superior-level language requirement) and Francophone group.

The Lauder Institute is now accepting applications for the May 2017 entering class. Applicants to the Africa Program should have a working knowledge of Swahili, French, Portuguese, Spanish, German or other languages spoken in West, East and Southern Africa. ◆

This program is supported in part through the Belleville Family Fund for Africa, established through the generosity of Bill Belleville and Melissa (Merten) Belleville (Lauder Class of 2000).

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