

Africa Center Charter

The Africa Center at Colorado State University is a network of faculty, students, scholars, and community members worldwide that promotes and supports research, engagement, and teaching on African social and environmental sustainability. The Center aligns well with CSU's Strategic Roadmap 2035 by 1) exposing students to diverse global perspectives, 2) supporting international collaborations and partnerships, 3) partnering with scholars and organizations across Colorado, 3) attracting an increasingly diverse and international body of learners and educators, and 4) working with the K-12 community of educators. This charter is the consensus document that provides active partners with the key elements of the Center and how it operates.

Why Now

As CSU has committed to 'comprehensive internationalization' (<https://international.colostate.edu/about-us/mission/>), the Africa Center community of multiple stakeholders, including researchers, students, practitioners, and community members, works together to address important issues on the African continent. Given the challenges facing Africa and the world, including those in our Colorado backyard, the Africa Center community supports an evolving set of best research, practices, resources, and learning opportunities (see website <https://africacenter.colostate.edu>).

Mission and Vision

The Africa Center aims to foster environmental, economic, and social sustainability through teaching, research, and engagement.

Its vision is to lead change for sustainable African environments and societies

Objectives

1. Develop a network/community of faculty, students, teachers, and scholars;
2. Increase awareness of and engagement in African social-environmental issues;
3. Engage, inspire, and prepare future collaborative leaders to strengthen scholarly intellectual capacity, build community and collegiality, and offer cross-disciplinary opportunities to learn about research and share feedback;
4. Create a funding strategy to sustain Africa Center efforts. This includes facilitating new partnerships, including industries, government agencies, philanthropic organizations, and communities, to pursue external funding for research on sustainability issues in Africa; accelerating new strategies for student support for research in Africa; and creating/advancing offerings of CEUs (Continuing Education Units) for K-12 teachers and a graduate certificate in Sustainable Development in Africa.

Geographic Scope

Over 100 faculty members and more graduate students from Africa and the US, across over 30 departments at CSU, engage in research and engagement related to Africa. Thus, the Center's activities apply to communities and countries throughout the African continent.

Approach

The Africa Center is a promoter, builder, provider, and linker. A series of talks, panels, social events, podcasts and blogs, student education and scholarships, and awards build collaborative capacity across the university and beyond. The Center builds relationships by exchanging ideas, collaborating on shared priorities, and providing a community of support. The Center facilitates collaboration and dialogue among faculty, students, and scholars and develops linkages with African universities and institutions to exchange knowledge, promote resource sharing, and expand a scholarly community. It supports African-related teachings and research through avenues of outreach, including workshops, K-12 lectures, K-12 teacher training, and events.

- **Promote:** The Center promotes ideas for solutions for timely and vital issues of African social-environmental well-being and sustainability
- **Build:** The Center builds a network of CSU faculty, students, staff, community and regional members, and African partners for research, education, and engagement
- **Provide:** The Center provides a platform for CSU faculty, students, staff, community members, and Africans to engage with one another on African issues
- **Link:** The Center links diverse groups and types of knowledge to identify and solve environmental and social problems

Structure and Leadership Team

Housed within CSU's SoGES (School of Global Environmental Sustainability), the Africa Center provides outreach and research support by relying on funding from both donors and the CSU Office of the Provost. The Center started as a SoGES Global Challenge Research team in 2013-2014. Then, President Tony Frank initially funded it in 2015, and the Provost's Office has continued to fund it since 2016. The Center's administrative unit is SoGES, and we are housed in Johnson Hall on the CSU campus.

SoGES provides the enduring home for the Africa Center, which is vital to its current and future stability. SoGES's staff oversees the Africa Center budget while its director fundraises on behalf of the Center. The Africa Center has a director and associate director who are compensated through a course buyout or one month of salary to oversee its programming. The Center's staff is comprised of individuals who are paid hourly. The CSU community comes from all colleges and departments, including art, history, conservation biology, and veterinary medicine.

Foundation support and private donations fund competitively awarded graduate student scholarships to support research on Africa (<https://africacenter.colostate.edu/fellowship-recipient/>). One of our consistent priorities is to bring into being the next generation of African experts, be they academicians, policymakers, or applied practitioners on the continent of Africa itself. The Center emphasizes shared leadership to support African research and engagement at the university, local, state/regional, and global levels.

Directors and Executive Committee

The Director is responsible for overall management and strategic direction. The Associate Director oversees specific focus areas (Promote, Build, Provide Link, as stated above). The Africa Center executive committee currently comprises 7 to 10 faculty members from across the university and

one African graduate student who provides guidance on the Center's mission and vision. Terms are generally three years, renewable for up to two additional terms. Any executive committee member may nominate members who shall be elected by a majority vote of the committee at a duly noticed committee meeting. Expectations include regular attendance at meetings, active contribution, and preparation. The group suggests annual work programs and financial and organizational sustainability. They also provide ideas for new initiatives and priorities for the Center. The executive committee meets at least once each semester with notice.

Evaluation and Assessment

Metrics for internal and external support for the Africa Center are calculated each year in an annual report to the Provost. They include grants and donor support secured, student involvement and support, external partnerships, publications, videos, events, and the number of people involved and attending events.

Amending the Charter

With input from the Executive Committee, the Director recommends amendments to the charter. At a duly noticed meeting, members of the committee vote on the recommendations, with a majority vote, and the director's concurrence is needed for any amendments.

The Center currently supports several activities:

Media/Communications/Events

Eye on Africa Series (<https://africacenter.colostate.edu/category/eye-on-africa/>)

E.g., The Graduate Student Poster Symposium, held each semester, showcases the amazing stories of research and engagement that CSU students are involved in across the African continent.

Field Notes (<https://africacenter.colostate.edu/blog-field-notes/>) Podcasts and blogs of CSU research in Africa.

The Africa Center Newsletter: Attend, Learn and Listen. A monthly newsletter that keeps readers up to date on timely publications, media, and events happening in Africa happening in our community

Interactive Map of Africa: Showcases UpToDate projects and partnerships between faculty with collaborators across the African continent

Monthly Coffee Socials: These events bring faculty, students, and community members together to meet and greet. They serve as an interdisciplinary inquiry and communication hub, a source of knowledge and ideas, and a diffusion place.

Africa Matters: panel discussions by university faculty and other experts on timely topics relevant to Africa

Student Scholarship Awards: for devotion to the study of Africa. The Center provides support for African research, forging international partnerships.

Africa and Ale Annual Festival brings together local breweries, universities, and community partners to celebrate Africa through music and dance.

Local and Regional Networking: CSU Annual Student Involvement Expo; Denver Posner Center for International Development and their Annual Africa Agenda Summit; talks in local K-12 schools

Contact: csuafricacenter@gmail.com; <https://africacenter.colostate.edu/>

Website: <https://africacenter.colostate.edu>

Support Page : <https://give.colostate.edu/campaigns/44695/donations/new>)

Social media Channels: Facebook, X, Instagram