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Sharing His Knowledge with Africa's Students

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Sharing his knowledge with Africa's students

As a young boy growing up in Ghana, Martin Dwomoh-Tweneboah always knew he'd go to college, thanks to the encouragement of his father. Now he's helping other Africans achieve a quality education as well.

Dwomoh-Tweneboah, chair of the Linfield College Computing Science Department, has spent the past three summers bringing technology to Africa University, the first private institution of higher education in Zimbabwe.

First, he helped the institution establish a computer science department and develop a curriculum. Then, he designed and implemented a campus-wide computer network, installing state-of-the-art fiber optic cables and "smart" classrooms, saving the university hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"As an African, I feel that sense of responsibility to help improve the educational system on the continent," Dwomoh-Tweneboah said. "That will be my contribution to help improve the lives of the younger generation to bring about peace and prosperity."

Thanks to his efforts, 30 students are now in their second year of computer science study at Africa University, according to Rukudzo Joseph Murapa, vice chancellor of Africa University.

"Africa University has one of the best campus networks in Southern Africa," Murapa said. "Students and staff will now be able to collaborate with colleagues around the world."

Dwomoh-Tweneboah has brought extraordinary assets to the African continent, said Vivian Bull, Linfield president emerita. Bull, a former trustee of Africa University, is associated with the General Board of Higher Education of the United Methodist Church, which is supporting the work.

"He's African, and the African people respond to him," she said. "He's a hands-on person and he has brought a wonderful work ethic to the people. There's nothing he won't do."

Dwomoh-Tweneboah works side by side with staff and students, teaching them about the equipment. He said his work in Africa is a way to put into action Linfield's mission, Connecting Learning, Life, and Community, while modeling service to Linfield students.

"I talk with my students about the project," he said, "and they learn how technology is important in the lives of others outside the U.S."

Now, as part of the assessment team for the



Martin Dwomoh-Tweneboah, associate professor of computer science, helps to install a satellite dish on the roof of a learning center in Mozambique. Due to lack of infrastructure, African universities can accommodate only 5 percent of eligible students.

Methodist Global Educational Foundation Initiative, Dwomoh-Tweneboah is helping to expand Africa University through distance learning at satellite campuses. He and Bull have conducted feasibility studies for future sites in Congo, Angola, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

In July he hooked up a center in Mozambique, which will transmit courses in Portuguese from a Methodist university in Brazil via Africa University. In typical fashion, Dwomoh-Tweneboah rolled up his sleeves to knock down walls, build new partitions, run wiring, install a satellite dish, lay carpet, put together desks, paint and more.

"I do the work with them to show them that they can do it themselves," Dwomoh-Tweneboah said. "That sense of ownership, participation and control is what I want to impart to them."

— Laura Davis