

## EDUCATION

# Grant to bring African leaders to BU

## Ex-presidents to lecture, study starting in fall

By **CHRISTINE WALSH**

For The Patriot Ledger

BOSTON — A \$1 million grant from the Balfour Foundation will help Boston University bring former African presidents to campus to lecture and study.

The program will begin this fall through BU's African Presidential Archives and Research Center, which was created last year to encourage cooperation between American institutions and African nations.

The Lloyd G. Balfour African Presidents in Residence Program will allow former democratically elected African leaders to spend up to two years at BU. The leaders will use part of their time to travel around the United States and host public policy forums and discussions.

"They'll obviously be involved in the Boston University community," said Charles Stith, director of the African Presidential Archives and Research Center.

"We expect them to use some of this time to do some thinking, reflection about their term as president. We want to get them involved in the Greater Boston community, and then we want to get them outside of Boston to other parts of the country, as well," he said.

Stith, a former U.S. ambassador to Tanzania, recently toured five African countries and spoke with their current presidents about the program.

"The response across the board was unbelievably enthusiastic, and we look forward to their support and cooperation to make this thing the very unique initiative that it represents," Stith said.

Stith recently spent a month in Africa, meeting with presidents John Kufuor of Ghana, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Festus Mogae of Botswana, Bakili Muluzi of Malawi and Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania.

It will be several months before the center decides which leader it will host first, Stith said, but the center intends to have someone in place for the start of this fall semester.

"The presidents whom we invite will be nation-builders, individuals who have not enjoyed the luxuries

of tried and true constitutions and long traditions of national self-government," Boston University President Jon Westling said. "Leaders who indeed have fostered democracy deserve not only our deepest respect, but also our attention."

**"It does allow leaders to be thoughtful about the kind of experience of leadership that they had, ... and kind of add to the tradition of democratization in the countries from which they come."**

Charles Stith

The benefits of the residency program will be twofold, according to the center.

First, it will give the African leaders a chance to transition to civilian status in a place where their experience and expertise will be valued.

"It does allow leaders to be thoughtful about the kind of

experience of leadership that they had to record their reflections for posterity's sake and kind of add to the tradition of democratization in the countries from which they come," Stith said.

The program will also serve as an educational resource for BU, the Boston community and the nation, he said.

"Against the backdrop of Sept. 11, we've come to appreciate that we don't know as much about the rest of the world as we need to know," Stith said.

"So this is an opportunity for us to get a better understanding of what's going on in the world, and we can't but be helped in terms of how we craft both public and private policy," Stith said.

Westling said the program will strengthen the university's African studies program.

"The Balfour African Presidents in Residence Program will help us learn from the success of democratically-elected African presidents and bring their accomplishments to the widest possible public notice," he said.

Stith said he hopes the residency program will initiate discussions about the democratization and free market reform of Africa.

"In my experience as U.S. ambassador to Tanzania I came to appreciate that if U.S. policy toward Africa was going to be more progressive it needed to be more informed, and that one of the ways to do that is by creating some sort of means to enable the African point of view to find its way into our discussions in this country about U.S. policy toward Africa," he said.

It is also hoped that by involving African leaders, the African Presidential Archives and Research Center will become internationally renowned.

With BU's African studies program the second oldest in the nation, the university is a natural home for the center, Stith said.

Besides offering the residency program, the center serves as a repository for the documents of democratically-elected African leaders and organizes lecture series and academic conferences.

Recently, CNN International gave the center videotapes of "Inside Africa," its weekly television program about African culture, politics and business, and has promised to send along tapes of future episodes.