

Spring 2015 Issue



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### **CONGRATULATIONS**

May 2, 2015

Congrats to our College of Business graduates. I am so very proud of you and your accomplishments and look forward to your continued success.

You will be missed but I can tell you that I am so proud of your achievements and on this big day I want us to celebrate all of your hard work.

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Interim Dean



# 2015: THE SPRING SEMESTER IN PICTURES



India Parson in the classroom.



Nahja Marinnie participating in a commercial shoot.



Jay Davis and Deonesha Williams with Rodney the Ram.



Students participate in a networking event at Bull and Bear Club in Richmond.



Asjah Royal and Sam Kelly join Dorothy Jaeckle, Member of Board of Supervisors.



Monet, Jhadee, Kevin, Kianna, and Sam have fun at the MBL dinner in Richmond.



Tionna, Racheal, and Camila join Eldon Burton and Katina from GE for robotics.



Tanequa, Leontaye, and Kindra return as alums.



Corey, Eldon, Michael, Kera, and Diamond network with Jessie Bell and Bud Yerly.



Kianna and Sam networking.





Candid moment in Singleton on the phone.



Dr. Omojokun hosts students in his office.



Networking at MeadWestvaco (MWV).



Stacey and Daphne are sisters.



Nahja networks with industry.



Marketing students visit VCU's Brandcenter.



Industry teach in the classroom.

## Men of Troy

Different people use different terms for it to include “giving back”, “paying it forward” or “Building a Better World” but the practical effect is the same and it regards leaving any place a little better than when found it. For the College of Business students that, along with their peers in other colleges, participate in Men of Troy; it doesn't matter what you call it but it requires sacrifice. Specifically, students are volunteering countless hours at Ettrick Elementary mentoring young boys. Helping with homework, teaching life skills, encouraging the right values, setting an example, and just being a big brother are some of what students like James Barber (Management major) are doing at Ettrick. In fact, Barber and his colleagues are investing so much of their time in the young boys that Barber was among a group of persons recognized by Chesterfield County Public Schools at a major community luncheon in March attended by over three hundred persons. Said Barber, *“One of our most rewarding exercises was when we hosted the young men on campus in Jonathan Young’s Career Launch class to participate in the Small Group Role-Play with Industry curriculum. The boys were on their feet the whole time doing their elevator speeches and learning from college students and from over a dozen companies. I was really proud of how well they performed.”*

## Dinner with the Governor

It's not every day that the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia singles you out for your outstanding contributions but that is precisely what Governor McAuliffe did when College of Business students participated in a dinner with his Excellency. Specifically, McAuliffe recognized the students for their community service and for representing Virginia State University so well. Said Sam Kelly (Management major) of the experience, *“It opens your eyes to all of the possibilities and how in reach they are as a student at VSU.”* It should be noted that Sam was among a group of College of Business students that joined the Governor again for a major economic development announcement.



## CreateAthon

Only an artist can stay up for 24 hours straight and still have creative juices flowing! Absent sleep, most persons are debilitated or at least unable to be inventive enough to create a new brand but that is precisely what teams of Art & Design and Marketing students did for six regional non-profits. On March 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, more than twenty students sacrificed an evening of rest to participate in the inaugural Virginia State University CreateAthon.

Constituting a “creative marathon”, the CreateAthon model was adopted at VSU after success at other institutions of higher learning to include at Virginia Commonwealth University. To date, more than 1,300 non-profits have been provided more than \$16 million in free marketing and branding services. At VSU, the project was led by Dr. Ann Ford (Professor in Art & Design) after having collaborated with VCU’s CreateAthon in the past to include having her VSU students partner with students at VCU.



For Ann Ford, the opportunity to host our own CreateAthon at VSU was an opportunity to showcase Trojan talent while at the same time providing invaluable support to local Tri-Cities non-profits. Supporting Ford was Dr. Tom Larose and Dr. Andrew Feldstein (Chairs of Art & Design and Management & Marketing). Speaking of the experience, Shanikka Richardson (Marketing major) said *“I had previously created a brand for another nonprofit so I was familiar with the constraints of nonprofits’ limited resources so to do this pro bono was really special.”*

## CIAA Champions

When asked what transferrable skills the Lady Trojans learned on the basketball court and how they relate to business, Philandra Jordan (Management Information Systems major) and Antavia Stevens (Management major), and DeAnna Waters (Management major) explained that teamwork, playing within the lines, competition, understanding what it is to win and to lose, taking calculated risks, and hard work and preparation, are but a few. Not only are said skills paying off in the classroom but are reaping dividends on the hardwood. Specifically, the ladies had a banner season winning the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) and advancing to the NCAA Division II Women’s Tournament. Philandra, Antavia, and DeAnna; we are proud of you!!

## Newly Established Centers and Labs

Upon assuming his position as Interim Dean, Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun advocated for establishment of three new specialty centers within the College. Specifically, Dr. Omojokun went to work to create a Collaborative Digital Media lab, a Cyber Security lab, and an Entrepreneurship Center. Now, a year later and the planning is coming to fruition. The first center to open in time for the fall semester will be the Collaborative Digital Media lab. Assisted by a generous grant from the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, the lab has transformed a classroom in to a 21<sup>st</sup> century relevant facility with transformative equipment and capabilities. Next up, Dr. Omojokun is transforming another traditional classroom in to a Cyber Security lab to include installation of the College’s own server. Said lab will accommodate the College’s newest minor and allow for students to practice computer networks infrastructure protection and problem resolution. Additionally, the College is about to launch an Entrepreneurship Center!

## Graduation

Mixed feelings do not adequately convey for graduating seniors in The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business what it was like on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. On the one hand, seniors relished in the pride of accomplishment; on the other, graduates reckoned with the acknowledgement that they had concluded a very special chapter in their lives. Still, the graduates' attitudes were far from ambivalent. Rather, they were proud for what had been done. Said Justin Murchison (MISY major), *"I am excited to begin my career in IT at the Federal Reserve."* Twins Jade and Jasmine Mims (Management majors) added, *"We achieved a lot here. Multiple internships, academic accolades, friendships; we did what we aimed to do here."* Alexis Coleman (Marketing major) contributed, *"I am going to miss this place but I just secured my lease for an apartment in Richmond so I am not going far! Not going far; well said Alexis, well said! Our graduates may be departing campus for now but they will always be near to our hearts, not going far."*



### Coming to TV

Students along with faculty and staff in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business are achieving extraordinary success and can now be heard and seen in Virginia State University's newest commercials. For a quick peek of the student commercial, click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKdCzpkfMsw>

For a quick peek of the faculty commercial, click here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZa\\_INiFjh8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZa_INiFjh8)

## Turning the Page

The pen is mightier than the sword or so it is said. Students in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business this semester were able to regularly participate in something new for the College. Specifically, the College hosted over and over again authors for book signings. From authors like Meriel Martinez and her book *God and Mambo* to Derius Swinton and his book *Soar* to John Hope Bryant and his book *How the Poor Can Save Capitalism* to VSU alum Terrell Jones and his book *The Fastest Way to Win In College*, business students this semester were exposed to new experiences and new perspectives.

## I AM Petersburg

Virginia State University's campus may be located in the County of Chesterfield but when the average person is asked they often say "Petersburg". Proud of our relationships with both Chesterfield and Petersburg, it should be of no surprise to anyone that the College of Business jumped at the opportunity to collaborate with the City to rebrand the "Burg:" To include a coming soon to TV commercial featuring students, the College is proud to say, "I AM Petersburg".



## A Focus on Entrepreneurship

It has been said that students in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business on average are more entrepreneurial than their peers at other institutions of higher learning. Well, this semester the College of Business put the hypothesis to the test or at least partly. First, over sixty students in the senior capstone class spent all semester developing a business plan for the College's new Entrepreneurship Center. Said Kera Bridges (MISY major) of the effort, *"it really meant a lot to take ownership in a real project that will have impact on students for years that follow in our footsteps."*



The Entrepreneurship Center is in the works and recently submitted for a Small Business Administration grant. Expect to read more soon on the topic. Additionally, students in Dr. Patrice Perry-Rivers' Social Entrepreneurship class benefited from a semester-long speaker circuit consisting of leading regional entrepreneurs. Allison Selby (Management major) said, *"We learned about all kinds of businesses doing all kinds of things though each of them shared a common passion for entrepreneurship."*

## It is all in a brand

For Aqilah Bullen, Sam Kelly, Tarik Floyd, Kenneth Mills, and Briana Taylor, the opportunity to spend the day at the Virginia Commonwealth University's Brandcenter was an affirmation of their skills. Marketing undergraduates at VSU, the students' visit regarded VSU/VCU collaboration and the two schools' commitment to encouraging more Trojans to apply for graduate school at the prestigious Brandcenter in Richmond. The good news, it is already working! Already more College of Business students are applying. Expect more on this topic soon but in the interim please note that our marketing graduates are being sought out arguably like never before!



## An Interview with a Student



Diamond Sykes is a senior Information Systems major from Virginia Beach, Virginia

Age: 21 years old Career Goal: Database Analyst

**Regarding your future, what are you most excited for?** Starting my career at Oracle in June.

**Identify your favorite quote.** *"Everything you do, do it with all of your heart"*

Diamond Sykes

## An Interview with Faculty



Adeyemi A. Adekoya is a Professor of Management Information Systems

Place of origin: Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria Education: University of Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria and Syracuse University, New York

**What do you like most about teaching?** I see teaching as a great way to serve humanity; deriving from an age-long philosophy of *"If you teach, serve; if you serve, teach; in all situations, learn."*

**What advice would you convey to a new professor?** Achieving success in the professoriate, essentially is about relationship building; developing emotional connection with one's students.

## An Interview with an Alumnus



Ian Williams is a May, 2014 graduate

Employment: Events Coordinator at Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce (GRCC) in downtown Richmond

**What is the most challenging part of your job?** Networking with professionals who have been in the industry for years and introduce myself as “the new guy” and the point of contact.

**Most rewarding?** The accomplishments themselves; I can’t forget the Virginia State University Faculty and Trojans, and my organizations the Caribbean Students Association, and The Men of New Water who are always saying that they’re proud to see me doing well.

## An Interview with an Industry Stakeholder



Suzanne Jackson is CEO of HCA’s John Randolph Medical Centers in Hopewell, Virginia

Education: Bachelors from University Illinois-Champaign and Master’s degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

**What are your biggest goals and challenges as CEO?** My focus and priorities centers around creating a vision for the organization that is inspiring but also successfully meets the healthcare needs of the community. Creating the work environment for the employees to reach their maximum potential.

**Identify your favorite quote.** *Every morning I take 5 minutes to read a devotional to help stay centered. If I had to pick one quote; “If you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything”.* Author disputed

## An Interview with an Industry Stakeholder



Denny Morris is Executive Director of the Crater Planning District Commission

Education: Bachelors in Government from Ohio University and M.S. degree in Urban & Regional Planning from University of Tennessee

**Why do you work with students in the College of Business?** *“VSU serves as a crucible from which our future leaders in business and government will come. I can’t think of a more important endeavor.*

**What recommendation would you share with a graduating senior?** First a big congratulations. Face every day with confidence, perseverance and integrity.

**Identify your favorite quote.** *“Nothing is more rewarding than to watch someone who says it can’t be done get interrupted by someone actually doing it.”* Author Unknown

## Intimate Relationships with Industry

When asked what makes the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University special, stakeholders cite all kinds of examples. When asked what makes it unique, one recurring answer is provided; intimate relationships with industry. In a semester, the College collaborates with over six hundred companies ranging from Fortune 500 titans to sole proprietorships. Perhaps the best part, the College never restricts the partnership nor tries to put a square peg in a round hole. In other words, each relationship is valued for what it provides with little to no concern for what it does not.

So, what do these relationships look like and what are the tangible outcomes? First, in a semester the College hosts over two hundred fifty companies in the classroom. Few of these companies are invited to lecture or present but rather most are afforded an opportunity to coach or to facilitate. Why the latter and not the former? Simple, students learn by doing and to coach or facilitate accommodates doing! In addition to the in-classroom invites, the College hosts dozens of companies for A Day at VSU programming to include interviewing. Further, industry is on campus providing faculty with curriculum consultation, evaluating students’ presentations, assessing students’ development, and promoting specific career opportunities.

Like the on-campus collaboration, the College also in a semester sends over one hundred students off campus to participate in Project Shadow, sit in on industry meetings, attend breakfasts/lunches/dinners, and participate in networking events. In everything that the College does pertinent to industry collaboration, the aim for students is to refine interpersonal or “soft” skills, augment career awareness, and develop real-world skills not often learned in a traditional classroom.

The results are striking! Students are securing countless opportunities to include scores of internships, industry sponsored scholarships, co-ops, focus group invites, etc. And most importantly, graduates are being hired for careers related to their discipline! Added benefits include industry providing financial support, advocacy and visibility, credibility and much much more. Yet, it’s not just the students that benefit. Regarding the reward of working intimately with students in the College of Business, Mike Matthews (President and CEO of Hankins and Anderson) said, *“This makes it all worth it. There’s nothing more I want to do than make a positive difference with these students.”* Added Chuck Andolino (Entrepreneur), *“I just wish more institutions would set up more programs that really reflect the needs of our students. Your program is a model of what can be done to give students the tools that they need to become successful.”*

At the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business, relationships are paying off - in a BIG way!”

*“If you depart from the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business without having developed dozens of meaningful relationships with companies specific to what you want to do professionally, you have done something terribly wrong .”* Tarik Floyd, Marketing Minor



## Message from the Dean

It was a busy year in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. For beginners, I had the distinct privilege of being appointed Interim Dean; a position that I accepted only on the terms that as a College we would continue to put students “our customers” first. I can confidently share that arguably like never before, we achieved this objective. For one, we provided more opportunities for our students. Our new Cyber Security minor is experiencing exponential growth. I am particularly proud to report that our new Cyber Security center will open for the fall semester and will accommodate our students’ requests to engage in computer networks infrastructure protection. On the topic of new centers, we also opened a new Collaborative Digital Media Lab thanks to the generosity of the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation. Next up, we will meet our customers where they are at by opening a new Entrepreneurship Center. Said center will not solely constitute a learning laboratory but will also allow us to provide invaluable community service to start-up businesses in the region. On the topic of community service, our students this year spent countless hours 1) doing taxes for residents in the community 2) mentoring children at Ettrick Elementary 3) revitalizing Evergreen Cemetery in Richmond and 4) supporting dozens of non-profits and other causes. One project in particular regarded two of our ladies being profiled on NBC for their contributions to the faith community and to helping VSU Build A Better World.

This academic year we celebrated over 400 tangible student accomplishments ranging from internships to job offers to scholarships awarded. We continue to send students overseas to study and to teach. Places of destination include China, Greece, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Thailand. We hosted over 300 companies in the classroom this year to teach, to coach, to facilitate. We had hundreds of student visits to companies for Project Shadow and for dinners/lunches/etc. Our students even joined the Governor of Virginia on two occasions including for dinner!

Some particularly noteworthy accolades regarded our recent alums to include Kelsey Evans winning the Fullbright Award and LeQuan Hylton being profiled in Style Weekly’s Top 40 under 40. Our friends in industry took notice and bestowed generous gifts on us. A particularly big thanks to Allmond & Company, SunTrust, Mazda, and Enterprise Rent-a-Car.

Our faculty also was recognized for their contributions to our students. Dr. Jae-Kwang Hwang was awarded the Ukrops Outstanding Faculty Award at Opening Convocation and Dr. Kim Gower, at the time an Assistant Professor in the College, was awarded the 2014 New Educator Award by the OBTS Teaching Society for Management Educators. Additionally, it should be noted that our faculty/staff along with our students hosted workshops and/or participated in over thirty events at regional high schools as part of our student recruitment efforts.

The truth is that it would be a very very long list if I were to recognize all of our accomplishments. So instead perhaps I should share my gratitude to 1) our outstanding students for all of their hard-work 2) our incredible alumni for all of their achievements and support 3) our brilliant faculty and staff for their contributions 4) our industry partners for their service and opportunities and 5) our University’s leadership to include Dr. Hammond and Dr. Hill.

Thank you all for an outstanding year!

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun



Dr. Hammond and Dr. Hill visit with the College’s faculty and staff. A big thanks to the President & Provost!