

Fall 2020 Issue



This newsletter is dedicated to Lucinda Conteh (Management major) and Miss Virginia State University.

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CONGRATS!

“Congratulations to our 92nd Queen Miss Lucinda Conteh on being awarded Miss Congeniality and placing in the Top 10 in the National Black College Hall of Fame "Competition of Black College Queens."

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President

“Congratulations Lucinda! Proud of you as I am of all of your colleagues. Continue to lead by example; I know you will!”

Dr. Donald Palm, Provost

“I know Lucinda would be the first to say that her achievement is representative of all of her colleagues in the College and at the University.”

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean

2020: THE FALL SEMESTER IN PICTURES



David Buchanan is an aspiring attorney in the College.



Marcus Jones sports the ubiquitous mask.



Cristy Hinton is a top performing accounting major.



Lucinda Conteh is Miss Virginia State University.

Richard Green is an accomplished Management Information Systems major who has training in cyber security.



Derrick Lowe, Chamyra Riddick, and Donea Brooks are all seniors performing extraordinarily well in every regard in the College of Business. Above. Anjanette Byrd, Adiana Brittle, Andrew Stegman, and C. J. Epperson constitute big-time talent in the College. Below.



Alahna Knight, Kyla Best, Jaylin Crawley, Darius Holeman, and Kyren Clemons are a force to be reckoned with in the College. Below.



BOV

Congratulations to Shavonne Gordon on her appointment by Governor Ralph Northam to the Board of Visitors (BOV) responsible for oversight of the University. Gordon had for a long time served on the College's Industry Council(s) where she provided invaluable assistance. From guest teaching, to hosting students for shadow opportunities, to advising on the curriculum, Gordon was a mainstay in the College. The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business congratulates her on her appointment and is grateful for service. It should be noted that Ms. Gordon is now the second Industry Council(s) member to have been elevated after Harry Black did the same.



Among the best of friends

Atlantic Union Bank has announced a new partnership with Virginia State University. The Atlantic Union Bank Scholars is a five-year scholarship fund for VSU business/finance students in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. In addition to financial support, scholarship recipients will also be offered a paid summer internship at the Bank. The organizations are currently working together to establish the scholarship fund details and criteria. The Bank's relationship with VSU is long standing and includes participating in career fairs, recruiting interns and full-time employees and bank executives sharing their expertise with students in the classroom.

"The investment from Atlantic Union Bank helps us provide the financial resources needed for our students to complete their college degree," said Dr. Makola Abdullah, President of Virginia State University. *"We are excited about this partnership that will not only provide financial resources for students, but also hands-on learning and practical experiences to prepare them for their future careers."*

The partnership with VSU is part of Atlantic Union Bank's commitment to accelerating efforts to create stronger and more inclusive communities. *"Despite the progress that has been made, more still needs to be done to advance social justice and build more inclusive workplaces and communities,"* said John Asbury, chief executive officer of Atlantic Union Bank. *"While we don't have all the answers, we are committed to being part of the solution and working toward this shared goal."* * See below.



Past semesters' pictures of John Asbury interfacing with the College including in the classroom, at the office, and at a conference.

Helping Hand

The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University like the rest of the University operated remotely this semester. A team effort, it should be noted that one faculty administrator went above and beyond in providing leadership beyond just Singleton Hall. Specifically, Sharon Taylor (Director of Advising) was the Trojan SOS Team Leader since March providing information and assisting students in solving issues related to the pandemic. Ms. Taylor assisted students in acquiring loaner laptops from Technology Services, served on the Trojan Spirit Review Committee approving applications for students in need of financial assistance for housing, food, academic resources, and transportation and was a member of the VSU Process Innovation Committee developing processes for academic advising. Together, her contributions helped the University mitigate many of the hardships imposed by a relentless virus seemingly affecting every part of life.

Graduation, In their own words

Still virtual because of the pandemic, graduation at The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University in 2020 looks and feels different but still is a reason for celebration. *“Like everyone else, I would of course preferred that my last year in college not ended during a pandemic but I am nonetheless proud to have made it this far and to have walked across the stage even if only virtually. I am grateful to VSU and am excited to continue my accounting career at a Fortune 500 company”* said Aishata Wann. Aishata added, *“I look forward to when life returns to normal and I can return to campus as an alum to give back and to even guest teach in the College of Business like so many of my predecessors.”*



Re-elected

Jonathan Young (Director of Corporate Relations) won a second four year term on the School Board for the City of Richmond having between the two campaigns won over 15,000 votes. Responsible for a \$400 million budget and more than 24,000 students, Young, among other initiatives, loves to recruit Richmond students to the College.

TMCF

Ten students this semester participated in a virtual leadership conference hosted by the Thurgood Marshall College Fund interfacing with leading companies.

Views by Adi

Adiana Brittle (Marketing major) is but the most recent student to launch her business while still in school. Views by Adi is an online sunglass boutique aimed at all audiences. Said Adiana, *“I created VIEWS by Adi so that everyone can achieve that effortless day to night touch to their outfits.”*



Build a Billion Dollar Business

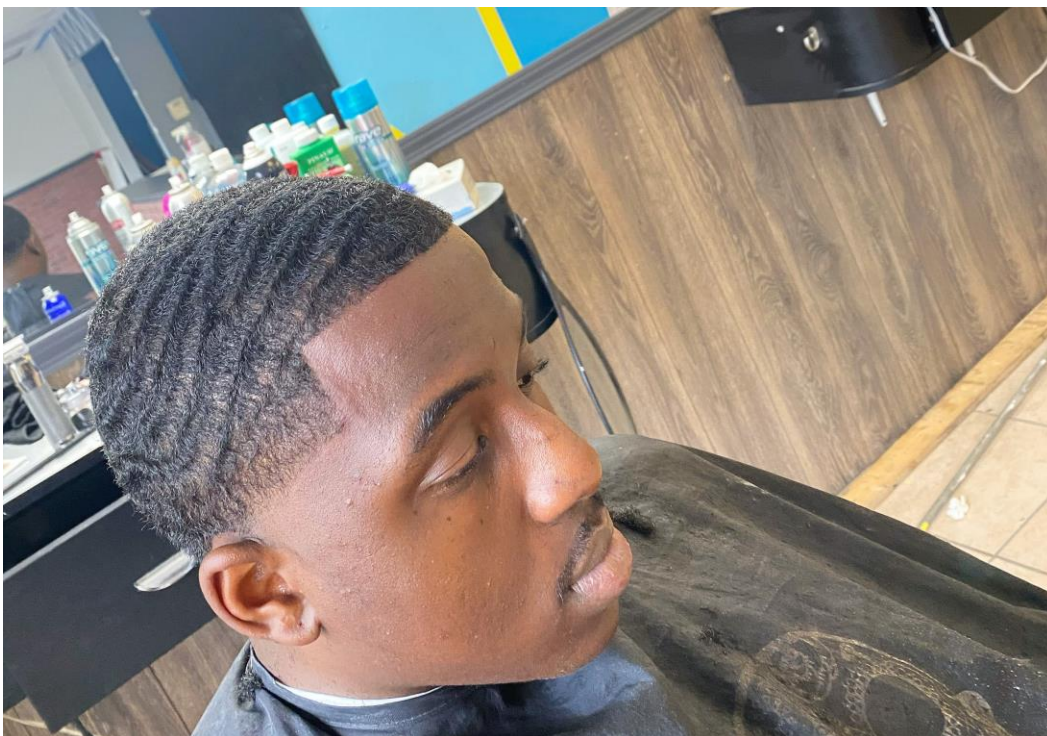
Over one hundred students attended a virtual forum this semester wherein Ms. Loida Lewis (widow of the College’s namesake) shared life lessons and tips and strategies for being successful explaining how her late husband, Reginald F. Lewis, built a billion dollar business.

Miss VSU

The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business congratulates Lucinda Conteh (Management major) on being named the 92nd Miss Virginia State University. An accomplished scholar, Lucinda is most highly regarded by her peers along with faculty/staff. Among the most common attributes used to describe Ms. Conteh include passionate, astute, confident, articulate, visionary, and leader. The College concurs with all of that and wishes her continued success.



More Pictures



Jaycee Lowe and Ron Chamblis are up and coming superstars in the College. Above.

Qahir Girard is a student-athlete and in this pic he experienced a haircut at a barber in the universe of COVID. Below.

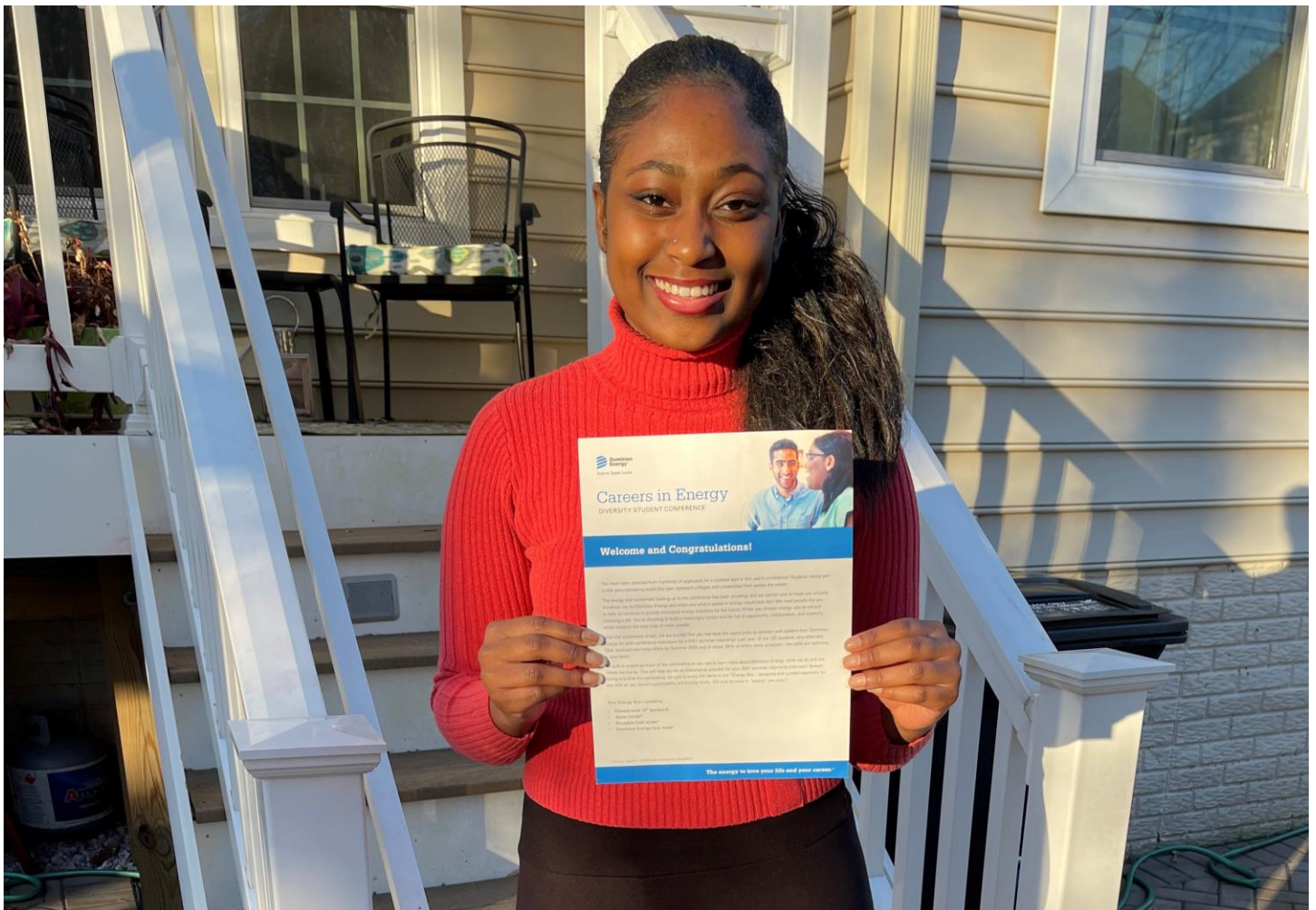
Dominion Diversity

As first reported at www.vsu.edu, Dominion Energy (NYSE: D) announced that Virginia State University is among 11 historically black colleges and universities in Virginia, Ohio, North Carolina and South Carolina that will receive support through a \$35 million initiative aimed at promoting higher education equity. The six-year “HBCU Promise” program will provide \$25 million in funding to select institutions. Additionally, a \$10 million scholarship fund will support African American and underrepresented minority students across the company’s service territory.

Said Thomas F. Farrell, II, the company’s chairman, president and chief executive officer, *“We have all been witness to our country’s evolving conversation on race and social justice. The country is changing, and we have been looking for ways that we can make a difference. Investing in these important institutions – which serve as a springboard for social and economic mobility for so many – is one way we can help.”*

“We are grateful for Dominion’s nearly 40 years of volunteer and financial support to HBCUs,” says VSU President, Dr. Makola M. Abdullah. “This initiative will make an impactful difference at VSU as we continue providing a transformative educational experience to our students.”

In the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business, Dominion Energy has long been a champion. From hiring graduates to providing internships to guest teaching to making available scholarships, the leader in energy exemplifies corporate stewardship. One particularly exciting component of the relationship regards the Dominion Energy Diversity Student Conference as attended by Blaise Davenport (Management Information Systems major) this semester.



Student teaches coding in K-12

In spite of the pandemic, the College's undergraduate bridge efforts continue. This fall, Christine Bautista (Management Information Systems major) taught coding to students at Falling Creek Middle School in Chesterfield. A Title 1 school, the school benefits from a partnership with Dr. Michael Edwards and the Leadership and Achievement Academy. For Christine, the experience was exhilarating. *"I have an opportunity to encourage children to consider a future in STEM. Coding and other computer related jobs are underrepresented as it relates to minorities. To change that requires starting when children are young; precisely what we are doing at the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business."*



Ambassador

James Grant, IV (Management Information Systems major) served as an Ambassador at the Open House in fall answering future students' questions related to all aspects of the university. Asked why he was interested in doing this, he said, *"Serving my alma mater is my duty! Our prospective students need to know how great our HBCU's are and the many roles they played during their development."*



Message from the Dean

Here we are again. After the virtual commencement this summer, we had all hoped that perhaps by now we would be past the pandemic. Yet, COVID had other ideas and our community, this country, indeed the world is still enduring the virus. And enduring is perhaps the word that is most relevant for the Virginia State University graduating class December 2020. If you Google the term endurance, two definitions immediately arrive on your screen including, "the fact or power of enduring an unpleasant or difficult process or situation without giving way" and "denoting or relating to a race or other sporting event that takes place over a long distance or otherwise demands great physical stamina."

I believe both definitions are applicable. Like a race or sporting event, our graduates have gone the distance. Their fortitude and determination are why we celebrate them. Also, like sport; they had coaches who helped them along the way. Faculty and staff, even colleagues, and certainly their parents and loved ones coached them along. But the first definition for endurance is also relevant for our graduates on their special day. For I know, we know, that it was at times difficult to be away from campus and their friends the nine months. Yet, they did not give way. Our students persisted and because of it, they are stronger.

I have every confidence that because our graduates have run this race and because they stayed the path even in these circumstances they are perhaps more ready than any graduating class before them. I can say this because I saw the caliber of their work. They did not rest nor relent in their duties but instead they gave even more. Our faculty reported how our students gave of themselves and our community is better for it. I do not know when this pandemic will end nor when life as we knew it will resume but what I do know is that no matter what comes next, our graduates are ready for it.

To our faculty and staff, alums, and industry partners, you too have persevered. I know it has not been easy but because of your hard work and diligence, our graduating class along with all of our students are stronger, wiser, and more resilient. Our young professionals obviously deserve credit for this but so do you; immense credit! It does not go unnoticed! Thank you!

Sincerely,

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean

