

Fall 2019 Issue



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This newsletter is dedicated to President Makola Abdullah. The Virginia State University Board of Visitors voted to extend President Abdullah's contract until June 30, 2024.

**REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP**

“I work with a team of dedicated administrators, faculty and staff who are committed in upholding a high standard of excellence by ensuring the University provides a transformative educational experience for our scholars.”\*

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President

“I thank the President, faculty, and staff for preparing our students to assume leadership roles and I could see the happiness on their faces on graduation day.”

Dr. Donald Palm, Provost

“With President Abdullah’s vision and passion, we are confident he will continuously elevate the University with stability and academic excellence.” \*

Huron F. Winstead, Rector

“The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business is grateful to President Abdullah and all of his support of our students, faculty, and staff. We are making big strides because of the University’s leadership including the President, Provost, and Board of Visitors.”

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean

# 2019: THE FALL SEMESTER IN PICTURES



Adiana Brittle and Destiny Sanders hosted Governor Ralph Northam on campus.



D'Angela, Destiny, and Destiny were VIP guests at the Folk Festival.



Mayor Levar Stoney embraces jasmine Canady at a corporate dinner.



Fred, CJ, and Marcus attend an entrepreneurship conference. American Marketing Association visits the VCU Brandcenter. Lucinda attends the HBCU Marketplace.



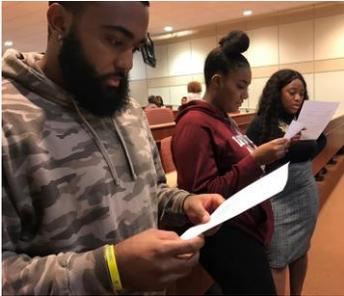
Wesley Wright returns to guest teach.



Darius instructs high school students for FBLA.



Corey Vickers is an entrepreneur.



Martin, Reem, and Lucinda are rock-stars.



Steve Holeman hosts the SFEPD conference.



Shannon Lee is all smiles.



Aisha Wann is a princess.

## Dean Launches Student Success Support Fund

The Dean of the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business (RFLCB) – Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun – has launched the RFLCB Student Success Support Fund. All faculty and staff in the College are contributing to the fund annually through payroll deduction or check. The following are some of the items the fund will support:

- Student certification which enhances job placement
- Student conference participation
- Student travel to state-wide and national competitions
- Student recruitment and providing financial awards



## Future Business Leaders of America

A big thanks to The College's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) chapter for tutoring, mentoring, facilitating workshops, and convening panel discussions for high school students this fall!

## Ten Under 10

Congratulations to Tarik Floyd (Management major and 16 grad), Tiffany Gullins (Marketing major and 14 grad), and Frednesha Sanders (Management major and 16 grad) for being among ten Virginia State University alumni honored with receipt of the second annual Ten Under 10 award. Reserved for the top graduates of the University within the last decade, between last year's inaugural class inductees including Jhadee Gordon and Chelsea Jackson, the College lays claim to no less than one in four of the inductees. As always, the College's alums are leading. For additional information, click here <http://www.vsu.edu/advancement/alumni-relations/vsu-ten-ten.php>



## Undergraduate Bridge

Few parts of the College's mission are as important as giving back and lifting up K-12. It's why in a semester so many undergrads spend so much time tutoring, mentoring, etc. It is why faculty/staff are so invested in the region's schools. This semester alone the College visited nearly thirty schools! Also, the College hosted high school students on campus including for a Metropolitan Business League/Richmond Public Schools Undergraduate Bridge Day. Said Lucinda Conteh (Management major), *"I really enjoyed hosting the high school students."* Jajuan Peel (Management major) who guest taught students at Hopewell High School asked, *"When may I go back to teach again?"* Darius Holeman (Management major) led a team for the College's Future Business Leaders of America chapter that visited Petersburg High School along with the Chesterfield Career and Technical Center. He said, *"This is what we do!"*



## It should not be Taboo to Discuss

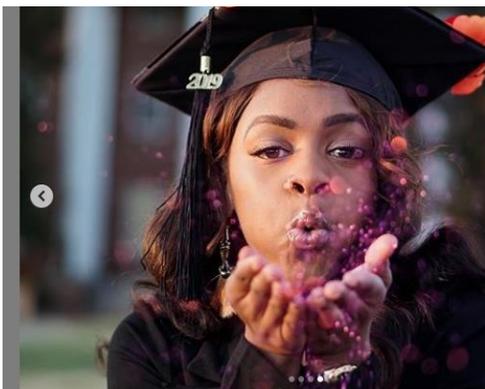
Historically, among the most taboo topics to discuss was mental illness and above all else suicide. Regarding the latter, persons often were reluctant to ask someone in crisis if they were considering taking their life. Concerns were not addressed afraid that it would make for an awkward conversation and/or would insert the idea in another head. This semester, the College confronted the issue head on by hosting not once but twice leading expert Anne Moss Rogers from Emotionally Naked. Rogers led hands-on workshops that included one student submitting a note anonymously to Anne Moss that her workshop may have saved their life. Life is too precious; it should not be taboo to discuss mental health!

## Welcome Home to our Alumni

The College could not possibly be any prouder of our alumni for all of their accomplishments. It is but one reason why Homecoming every year is so rewarding. All week preceding the big day former students stopped in to say hello to faculty/staff and to catch up in person. Additionally, the College hosted an alumni entrepreneurship panel made possible because of the hard work by Jerome Hood. Attended by students with an interest in entrepreneurship, the panel addressed subjects pertinent to risk, owning your brand, differentiation in the market, leadership, capital, and work ethic. A big thanks to, along with Hood, the following alums, Rotunda Rush, Travis Davis, Tanikka Mason, and Kwame Nkrumah. Few experiences are as rewarding and instructional for undergrads as the opportunity to learn from their predecessors who like them walked the same halls, ate the same food, and breathed the same air. Our alumni are always welcome home!

## Graduation, In their own words

On December 14<sup>th</sup> on the campus of Virginia State University graduates of the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business celebrated the culmination of a lot of hard work and determination. Said Cheyanne Thomas (Marketing major) *“I found myself and I lost myself and I found myself again and in the process I became a better woman.”* Jermaine Perrine (Accounting major) remarked, *“It was a fun ride and I am confident of my success and excited to resume my career at PricewaterhouseCoopers.”* Adante Holliman (Marketing major) added, *“I am forever grateful for the faculty/staff along with my colleagues in the College of Business. I was afforded so many opportunities and cannot adequately say thank you.”*



## Giving Tuesday

Fred Sanders (Management major) joined President Makola Abdullah for a film shoot to encourage persons to provide financial support to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU’s). In the film Fred inquired of the President about HBCU Giving Tuesday. Establishing “rules” for giving, President Abdullah encouraged giving to at least three HBCU’s, to your alma mater, and to the HBCU in nearest proximity to home. To watch the film, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-4MS9L4g8k>



## Learning from Lawyers

The College’s resident attorneys including Taneisha Brown and Alex Weimer (Management Professors) again this semester hosted prominent lawyers in the classroom including George Martin from McGuire Woods and Chris Winslow from the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors.

## Folk & Friends

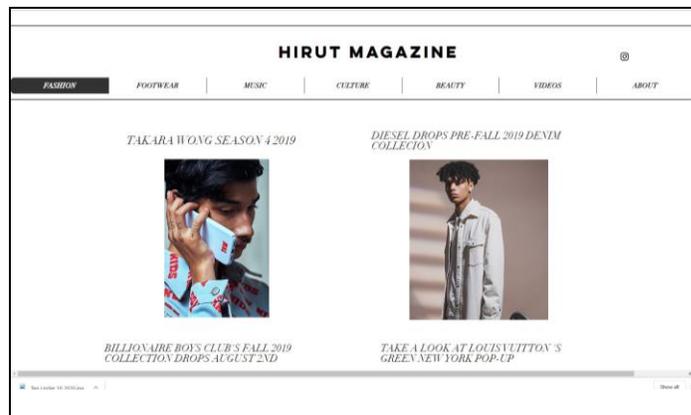
What is better than to spend the weekend with your closest 200,000 friends? Adding folk music to the celebration! Again this year, the College was represented at the RVA Folk Festival. Attendees participated in the VIP festivities in between watching performances, listening to bands, singing and dancing, along with networking with scores of companies. David Buchanan (Management major) caught up with his hosts including Lisa Sims, Lucy Meade, Renee Gaines, and Anedra Bourne before spotting the College’s Sharon Taylor on the dance floor.



David said, *"I knew Ms. Taylor cool but I didn't know that cool!"* D'Angela Jones (Management major) liked talking selfies out on the Potterfield Bridge over the James River. D'Angela and Destiny Smith (Accounting major) had also attended the year before and along with Destiny Hodges (Marketing major) were among the first to arrive Saturday morning to a cacophony of sounds. The ladies' favorite performance was an Irish folk band that elicited a thunderous applause.

## Hirut Magazine

Congratulations to Hirut Sheta (Marketing major) on launching her highly successful online fashion magazine. Comprised of cutting edge all original content, Hirut Magazine has become the must-read place to go to stay hip on what fashion is in vogue. For Hirut, the magazine has helped launch her career along with her credibility as an entrepreneur. To view, click here: <https://www.hirutmagazine.com/>



## An Interview with a Student



Unique Lotman is a senior Accounting major from Detroit.

Career aspiration is to be an entrepreneur.

Unique has a terrific work ethic, is among the most amiable students in the College, and is passionate about family and finances.

**What is your favorite memory at VSU?** All of it! At the top, joining FBLA and competing against other schools along with my cost accounting competition. VSU really is transformative. I am confident of my success subsequent college and am grateful for my faculty/staff along with my colleagues.

## An Interview with Faculty/Staff



Felicia Turner is the Coordinator of Accreditation for the College and is also responsible for coordinating all transfers

Place of origin: All over; Air Force self-described "brat"

Education: Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communications from Norfolk State University and a Master's Degree in Education from VSU

**What do you like most about your job?** Working with students and being a part of their growth and development, they help me stay relevant.

**What advice would you give a freshman?** Make sure you get to know your professors, know your curriculum, get involved and ask a-lot of questions.

## An Interview with an Alumnus



Tovia Gregory is a 2004 Accounting graduate

Employment: IT Audit Manager at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

Tovia earned a Master's Degree in Cybersecurity

**What advice would you give an accounting major?** Take advantage of all of your available resources on campus, i.e. professors, Career Services, etc. It is because of the professors and my involvement in our NABA chapter that I was able to land a job with Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) prior to graduating.

## An Interview with an Industry Stakeholder



Allyson Wells, Communications Manager at Virginia Credit Union

Education: Bachelors in Public Relations from Virginia Commonwealth University

Previously: Staffing Specialist at the Federal Reserve

**What advice would you give a student?** Put your opportunity glasses on. See everything as a possibility to learn, understand, grow and be better. Is there something that excites you? Research it. Be curious. Is there someone you admire? Ask to connect for a conversation.

## An Interview with an Industry Stakeholder



Vaughan Long owns Tax Solutions Alliance and has employed students from the College of Business

Education: Bachelor's from N.C. State University

Interests: Tax Dispute Resolution and Litigation

**Why do you collaborate with us?** In all of my visits to VSU and working with the students, the questions that VSU students ask when we teach show how actively they are participating in the class and how receptive they are to the advice from our experience. It is that energy that makes it so much fun to come back each time to teach a class.

What is your website? <https://taxsolutionsalliance.com/>

**Why did you start your business?** One of our internal goals is to improve our inter office (internal) communication and how we track our work and projects for clients. As a business owner, not only will the improved communication increase our clients' satisfaction, but it will also improve our operating margins if we can communicate more efficiently.

## Mentoring: More than a Degree

Readers already know about the College's relationship with hundreds of companies affording students countless opportunities in a semester including interfacing with, on average, two hundred and fifty industry professionals in the classroom, participating in scores of networking events, shadowing, attending conferences, and collaborating on real projects. Effective this semester, students can now partner with an industry mentor.

Born out of the Industry Council(s) strategic plan, the new mentoring initiative by the end of the semester already had fifty student participants and by the time the academic year adjourns will enroll one hundred undergrads. Not unlike the College's approach to everything, relationships are at the core of the new initiative. Leveraging said relationships, the College pairs a student with an industry mentor that is doing work in the space pertinent to the student's interest. The mentor and mentee then kick off their new relationship by meeting in person. The objective is the same as always for the College, i.e. to provide students premium access to industry. At The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business, an education is more than a degree. Instead, an education is about a network of persons that provide invaluable consultation while opening doors.

Said Naya Hill (Management/HR major) of her mentor, *"Dave Winter has been able to provide me a lot of direction relevant to human resources."* Kyla Best (Marketing major) could not stop talking about her mentor after first meeting with alum Marnelle Fanfan. Kyla shared, *"Marnelle is so nice!"* C.J. Epperson (Management major) aims to own a lawn care business so he could not have been more excited to learn from Sal Musarra who is a landscape architect. *"I am so impressed with Sal Musarra and his experience,"* said C.J.

In prioritizing relationships and premium access to industry, the College's commitment to more than a degree is materializing in big gains for undergrads. Said Jonathan Young (Director of Corporate Relations), *"often the difference between a student being successful or not is access to a trusted confidante that is capable of making things happen for persons that just show up. All our students need to do is just show up and they will succeed."* Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun (Dean) added, *"We are forever grateful to all of our alums, business partners, non-profit friends, etc. that invest in our young professionals."*

*In a semester the College hosts on average over two hundred and fifty companies on campus and in a term scores of students depart the grounds to participate in networking events. From dinners to conferences to breakfasts, the College's students are interfacing with thousands of professionals in the region.*

## Beat Cancer

In The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business, our students understand that as important as academics are some things are even more critical. For Monique Daniels (Accounting major), that other thing is increasing awareness about children's cancer and raising money to beat it. It's what prompted Monique to go on NBC to spread the word. Then and now, Monique encourages readers to go to <https://www.stjude.org/> and make a donation to help a child in need.



## Coming Soon

Coming soon to NBC, the College of Business will be profiled in new commercials featuring the diverse talent in Singleton Hall. The film shoots took place this fall and the editing has been initiated. Tamia Reese (Marketing major) was excited for the opportunity and remarked, *“It was fun to work with an Emmy award winning director.”* Christy Hinton (Accounting major) added, *“I cannot wait to see the finished project.”* Fred Sanders (Management major) got a sneak peek of what the commercial may look like after joining President Makola Abdullah for another film shoot.



## Women Who Mean Business

The Metropolitan Business League is serious about providing opportunities for young professionals and developing the next generation of business leaders. Among the organization’s programming this fall was the Women Who Mean Business summit attended by scores of leading professional woman. Also in attendance were students from the College and from Richmond Public Schools (RPS). A partnership that is materializing in undergraduate bridge initiatives, at the summit this fall high school students benefited not only from learning from the professional women but also from their slightly older colleagues now in college. Donea Brooks (Marketing major) was so pleased because of the experience. *“I attended anticipating that I would be the mentee but because of the thoughtfulness of Floyd Miller at MBL I also was able to be a mentor at the event.”* Amira Sine (Marketing major) added, *“The little ladies were so mature and professional. I was so proud of them.”* Together, MBL along with VSU and RPS, young professionals are earning hands-on opportunities relevant to entrepreneurship, soft-skills, and leadership. The College is grateful to alum Floyd Miller (CEO at MBL).



## HBCU Marketplace

Seven students participated in the HBCU Marketplace Conference in Baltimore allowing for cross-pollination between students from across the country’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

## Certified

Even casual observers recognize that students in the College of Business are disproportionately very entrepreneurial. Previous editions of this newsletter have documented the many undergraduates that have started their own business, participated in pitch competitions, or participated in the College’s Entrepreneurship Center programming. This semester however two dozen students earned certification in entrepreneurship. What would have normally cost the students a few hundred dollars instead was free due to the generosity of Lighthouse Labs. Over lunch, also provided by Lighthouse Labs, the students participated in hands-on learning activities and teaming exercises. The students did so well that the facilitator, Somiah Lattimore, remarked that the College’s students were among the best that she had seen of the schools that participated. Though welcomed remarks, it was not surprising for the College or its students!



## Plains, Trains, & Automobiles

Perhaps more than any preceding semester, students traveled all around the country and even the world. From New York City for a conference at Goldman Sachs to Boston for interviews to Detroit for a retreat to a sales summit in Atlanta to studying abroad in South Korea, all forms of transportation were used to carry the banner for the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University. Funded in part by donations from the Alumni Advisory Board, Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun (Dean) thanked the College's alums for their *"investment in allowing students to attend and participate in life-changing programs."*



## Thurgood Marshall

Named for the nation's first Supreme Court minority justice, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) provides invaluable support to the College. Between scholarship money, professional conferences, and career opportunities, the Fund is indispensable in facilitating professional development. The College is grateful to our partners at TMCf along with Dan Roberts (Director of the University's Honor's Program). This semester alone eleven students participated in the TMCf Annual Conference in D.C. and Richard Green (MISY major) was selected to participate in the Thurgood Marshall College Fund Apple Project. Richard said of TMCf, *"I am at a loss to describe how grateful I am for the Thurgood Marshall College Fund."*

## More Pictures



## A Worthy Dedication

On October 10<sup>th</sup> the student-run clothing store, Basically Business, located in Singleton Hall was dedicated in the honor of alumnus Mrs. Jenever Hill Brown. A retired educator, Mrs. Brown was recognized for her many contributions to the College, Basically Business along with the University and community as a whole. In a ceremony attended by Mrs. Hill along with her brother and fellow alum Mr. Charlie Hill who serves on the University's Governing Board of Visitors, a plaque was installed on the wall in the store. Said plaque includes "Resolved finally, that in appreciation for her impact and leadership to thousands of lives Jenever Hill Brown has touched, that a copy of this Resolution be encased and maintained permanently in this Basically Business Consignment Store in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University. At the event, Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun (Dean) said, *"We are grateful to Mrs. Jenever Hill Brown and we thank her along with Mr. Charlie Hill for all of their many contributions."*



## Making a Habit of This

Previous editions of this newsletter have bragged on alums like Deshauna Barber and Karmeshia Tuck who competed in Miss USA and USA National Miss respectively. Deshauna would take the crown in 2016; click here <http://business.vsu.edu/resources/alumni.php> It seems that The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University is making a habit of this because this fall another alum, i.e. Frednesha Sanders (Management major and 16 grad) competed for Miss North Carolina. Miss Metrolina from the Charlotte area, Frednesha finished strong and used the platform to champion her values. Next up, Jhadee Gordon (Accounting major and 17 grad) is competing for an opportunity to participate in Miss World Guyana. At the College of Business, we are making a habit of this!



## Student Accomplishments

Check out our students' fall 2019 semester accomplishments at <http://business.vsu.edu/news/2019/12/fall-2019-student-accomplishments.php>

## Hosting His Excellency

Adiana Brittle (Marketing major) and Destiny Sanders (Marketing major) had the opportunity to host Governor Ralph Northam on campus for a conversation regarding the Commonwealth's investment in higher learning and information technology degrees. The impetus regards Virginia's partnership with Amazon and the company's commitment to training the next generation of IT professionals. For the College, the Commonwealth's along with Amazon's objectives align well. In fact, Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun (Dean) said, *"Our information technology students are performing very well earning careers at places like Lockheed Martin, Michelin Tire, Ball Aerospace, the Federal Reserve, IBM, Sony, General Electric, Thomson Reuters, KPMG, and VDOT just to name a few so we are most excited to now partner with Amazon."*



## Dominion & Federal Reserve

A special thanks to Dominion Energy and the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond for hosting students for multiple visits this semester. Between the two organizations, students are afforded countless opportunities as evident in all of the alumni employed at both. Ce'Erra Patton at Dominion reflected on her tenure while in the College when hosting her successors. *"I am so grateful for everything the College of Business did for me."*



## UpRiver Summit

Celebrating the entrepreneurship “ecosystem” in Richmond, students participated again this year in the leading self-described “founder driven awesomeness” by sitting in on cutting-edge discussions.

### Message from the Dean

The end of another decade signals a time to reflect on change and what the next ten years will portend for the College and all of our stakeholders. To do that however necessitates that we first look back at all of what was done between 2010 and the new year.

Wow, where to begin! Well, for starters the College earned accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), received the largest gift in the history of the University and for it earned our namesake, i.e. the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. We took top honors among the nation’s business schools in both 2012 and 2017, received the 2018 Metropolitan Business League’s Chairman’s Leadership Award as presented by Governor Ralph Northam, was a RichTech Technology Innovation Deployment Awardee, and won the Governor’s Award for Innovative Use of Technology in Higher Education. Our graduates earned all kinds of accolades including our very own Deshauna Barber was crowned Miss USA! Students were regularly profiled for their leadership on television, the College participated in meetings at the White House, a professor won an International Teaching Award, new curriculum was created, a Center for Entrepreneurship was established, and a staffer was elected to office. New technology was unleashed, faculty published scores of journal articles and even textbooks, and students earned countless jobs/internships/scholarships, etc. The truth is that there is no adequate space herein to document all of our success this past decade but we are mindful that as we turn a new page we must not rest on our laurels.



That said, if the next decade is anything like the last we are confident that the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University will not only be a leader at this institution but at all of the Commonwealth’s institutions of higher learning.

So, what is next and what do we need to continue to lead. In regards to the latter, the answer is simple, your support. Please consider supporting us by entrusting your sons and daughters to attend school here, support us by continuing to hire our graduates, continue to spread the word regarding our accomplishments, and please consider donating your time and your money to the College of Business. Regarding the former, the world is changing fast because of artificial intelligence, automation, and robotics and the College is prepared to change with it accommodating new trends and new directions. Regarding the latter, we launched a Student Success Support Fund with contributions from all faculty and staff! What I am certain of is that a decade from now someone will be bragging on all of the

extraordinary ways that the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business changed countless lives for the better and in doing it provided for a transformative experience for our students embracing our role as Virginia’s Opportunity University!!!!

Sincerely,

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean



Guest instructors including James Wasilewski (left) and Victor Williams (right) provide invaluable contributions in training the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business undergraduates.