

Fall 2015 Issue



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## *INSIDE THIS ISSUE*

This newsletter is dedicated to  
Kianna Rodrigues.

### CONGRATULATIONS

Congrats to our Reginald F. Lewis 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. Best wishes!

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean

### ACCREDITATION

We are about to enter our reaffirmation of accreditation review by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Every five years, AACSB schools are reviewed to ensure excellence for what constitutes the most elite accreditation of business schools in the country. We are proud of our accreditation and we welcome the opportunity for review.

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean

## 2015: THE FALL SEMESTER IN PICTURES



Tarik Floyd, Deric Gassaway, and Sam Kelly at RVA TechJam in Richmond.



Kevin Carter networks with Nancy Bagranoff and Essie Weiss at UR



Students participate in a networking event with AITP.



James Barber, Stacey Elder, and Tanika Mann work with Tanner Collins.



Jhadee Gordon, Monet Graves, and Rolan Eason network with Woody Thomas, Owner of Magic Special Events.



Sam Frankfort networks with Suzanne Jackson at JRMC.



Brandin Harvell networks with Renee Chapline and Lauren Bowman.



Eliza Dizon is awesome.



The ladies at a Shamin Hotels breast cancer awareness party.



Kort, Eliza, and David celebrate their job offers.



Aaron Fuller reconnects with an old friend.



Society of Financial Education conference.



Harissa Korkoya with Debbie Sydow and Stephen Wilson.



Career Launch.



Ron Jaeckle from Fort Lee teaches.

## Society for Human Resource Management

An industry stamp of approval for an institution of higher learning's curriculum constitutes more than just best practices; it is validation that students are being taught business relevant material. Moreover it helps ensure for marketability of graduates attempting to make their mark in what has become an ever increasingly difficult labor market.

For precisely the reasons identified above, Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun (Dean) has promoted the College's departments earning industry certification. The most recent example regards Dr. Mark Kunze (Professor in Management) working with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) to earn certification of the College's human resource curriculum. Specifically, SHRM recognized the curriculum as being appropriately aligned with the requirements for the Society. Said Kunze, *"Recognition of our HR concentration by SHRM is the gold standard for human resource practitioners, so to have them sign off on what we are doing here is very rewarding for faculty but more importantly for alumni and students. A lot of our graduates are going on to earn prominent human resources positions in both the public and private sectors and this certification should help ensure that this hiring continues."*

## Green Thumb

The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business partnered with the VSU Office of Capital Outlay to beautify our campus this semester. Specifically, Jonathan Young (Director of Corporate Relations) led an initiative to secure corporate sponsors for a tree planting in October. Not surprisingly, the response was extraordinary! In fact, more companies offered to participate than locations for trees were available. Business students participated in the effort by joining the companies to plant the trees, i.e. six foot redbud trees.



Said Jhadee Gordon (Accounting major), *"It was fun to be a part of something so special that will continue in perpetuity and I look forward to returning as an alum to see the trees."*

## Hollywood

Their eyes were all starstruck when they met a big time Hollywood Producer. Kevin Carter (Accounting major), Aaron Fuller (Management major), Messiyah Kerr (Management major), and Devin Lightner (Marketing minor) got a taste of Hollywood this semester when they met and networked with Dave Rosenbaum. The prominent movie Producer with a portfolio including Minions, Kung Fu Panda, Despicable Me, and the Black Dahlia was very generous with his time when he met with the students.

The occasion regarded a networking event not unlike the countless networking events that students attend in a semester visiting with industry. Though business students are afforded some of the most unique opportunities to interface with hundreds of companies, few instances provide for hobnobbing with such widely recognized Hollywood movie producers as Rosenbaum for if no other reason than the VSU campus is 3,000 miles from southern California.



That said, more and more movies are being filmed in the region to include recently acclaimed films like Lincoln or the mini-series Turn. Additionally, College of Business students are being sought after for multimedia and other marketing relevant opportunities. For example, Lightner is receiving calls to support movie production and graduate Breyana Baggett worked on the Last Punch. Said Lightner, *“Film is a powerful medium and VSU prepared me well to compete in this biz.”*

## More Hollywood (Rumors)

One of the leading Hollywood news websites is reporting that the College’s namesake will be profiled in a new coming-to-the-big-screen movie in 2016. IMDb has let the cat out of the bag that the Reginald F. Lewis story will be told by prominent producers and directors next year. Leveraging a screenplay by Stephen Belber and based on the autobiography, *“Why Should White Guys Have All the Fun?”*, the movie’s cast has rumored to have some big household names to include perhaps Jamie Foxx playing the role of our own Reginald F. Lewis. The first African American to build a billion dollar company, Lewis learned business while an undergraduate at what is now Virginia State University. In August of 2010, the late Lewis’s foundation made a donation of \$1.5 million to VSU and was recognized with the naming of the College of Business.

## New Leadership

The Virginia State University Board of Visitors (BOV) this semester confirmed the appointment of Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun as Dean of the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. Dr. Omojokun has served VSU for over 25 years, advancing through the faculty and administrative ranks as Professor, Department Head (Management/Computer Information Systems) and Associate Dean of Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. Throughout his tenure at VSU, the University has called upon Dr. Omojokun to lead and/or assist with various campus-wide IT projects and systems. Highly regarded by colleagues and students, he has consistently demonstrated exemplary commitment to VSU's mission and principles.

Up next, the BOV will announce this week a new President for VSU. The College’s Jonathan Young (Director of Corporate Relations) served on the Search Committee representing the University’s staff.

## Monetary Policy

Visits to the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond have become almost routine for students in College of Business now that so many of their peers have been hired for a multitude of positions at the Fed. In fact, few employers have invested so much in our students. One recent visit to the Federal Reserve provided students an opportunity to not only revisit with their former colleagues but also to network with senior leadership both at the Fed and other banking institutions in town. Jessica Cox (Marketing major and 2013 grad) is responsible for all hospitality and events at the Fed and said of the opportunity to host undergrads from her alma mater, *"It is very special to be able to give back."* Added Chelsea Jackson (MISY major and 2014 grad) who is an Automation Engineer at the Fed, *"I am so proud that VSU is so well represented at such an important institution as the Federal Reserve."* *"A big thanks to the Federal Reserve for all of their support"* said Jimmy Brown (Accounting major) of the recent visit!



### Coming to the College of Business

What can a newly arriving student (freshman or transfer) expect of the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business and what are the keys to success? We asked Breyana Baggett (Marketing major and 2013 grad) to produce a commercial for us. For a quick peek, click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqP2oyZ1vKc&feature=youtu.be>

### National Association of Black Accountants (NABA)

Students in NABA this semester went to Pittsburgh for a conference, visited Genworth, and welcomed new members.

## New Faculty

The College of Business this semester welcomed five new faculty members to the team to include Dr. Arinola Adebayo, Dr. Arthur Wharton III, and Dr. Lubina Zaidi (Accounting & Finance Department), Dr. Taneisha Brown (Management & Marketing Department), and Dr. Aurelia Nicholas-Donald (Management/Computer Information Systems Department). Said Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun of the new additions, *"We are fortunate to have five new terrific faculty respected in their fields and committed to teaching our students."*

## Giving Back

Graduating seniors in the College's capstone course had an opportunity to give back this semester by completing a Community Needs Assessment and updated strategic plan for the Williamsburg Community Action Agency; a social enterprise that supports and empowers the working poor. Said the instructor Dr. Patrice Perry-Rivers, *"Our students' efforts will enable the continued funding for opts to help those less fortunate."* Deric Gassway (Marketing major) added, *"It's the right thing to do."*

## A Soft Launch, In the News

### The Progress-Index

It wasn't quite a party but it sort of felt like that when The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business hosted a soft launch for the Center for Entrepreneurship this semester. Celebrating the opening of what constitutes the first of its kind co-working space in the Tri-Cities community, the facility was partly made possible by a \$50,000 grant by the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation. In an article in the Progress Index, the Director of the Center and Assistant Professor Dr. Patrice Perry-Rivers said that a goal of the center is *"to reach out to the community entrepreneurs"* and *"produce some relevant academic research."*

Added Jonathan Young (Director of Corporate Relations), *“Initially, we will have entrepreneurs, start-ups, and other persons that are still young in their business cycle in this room on Fridays to interface with students; and for the entrepreneurs to barter, to exchange ideas or goods, to leverage our students for their capabilities.”* The Center came to fruition because of the commitment of Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun (Dean). To read more, click here: <http://www.progress-index.com/article/20150923/NEWS/150929883>

## Student-run clothing store opens on campus

It has been a long time coming but the College of Business this semester celebrated the opening of a student-run clothing store in Singleton Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

Staffed by seven business students, the store is fully equipped to provide business attire to all students of all shapes and sizes. Said store manager Stacey Elder, *“I am really proud of what we are doing here, providing access to clothing at a nominal cost while learning how to run a real business.”* Stacey added that the store is accepting donations! To learn more, call 804-524-5987.



## An Interview with a Student



Korie Collins is a junior Accounting major/Finance minor from Chicago

Age: 21 years old Career Goal: Controller

**Regarding your future, what are you most excited for?** Building life-long networks.

**Identify your favorite quote.** *“Failure to plan is planning to fail”*

Alan Lakein

## An Interview with Faculty



Venkat Mummalaneni is an Assistant Dean and Chair of the Department of Management and Marketing

Place of origin: India Education: Pennsylvania State University

**What do you like most about teaching?** Preparing young people for productive careers in the areas of marketing and business.

**What advice would you convey to a new professor?** My son is a new professor and my advice to him is to be well prepared and offer opportunities to learn about real business situations.

## An Interview with an Alumnus



Breyana Baggett is a May, 2013 marketing graduate

Employment: Marketing & Communications Assistant at The Dragas Companies, i.e. one of the top new home builders in Hampton Roads

**What is the most challenging part of your job?** Prioritizing tasks while wearing multiple hats, I have many additional responsibilities that are outside of my basic "scope of work".

**Most rewarding?** One of the most rewarding parts of my job is filming Testimonial Videos of our Homeowners with our Ad Agency. It's pretty fulfilling to hear residents speak so highly of our company and how we've helped them realize their dream of Homeownership.

## An Interview with an Industry Stakeholder



Jim Sowers is a principal at Transact Capital Partners in Richmond, Virginia (Investment bank that specializes in selling businesses)

Education: Systems Engineering and MBA from University of Virginia

**What are your biggest goals and challenges in selling businesses?** The biggest goal is finding a good fit between a buyer and a seller. The biggest challenge is overcoming significant business risks such as high customer concentration or incomplete management.

**What is your advice for our students?** *"Follow your passion, become an expert in your field and over time the money will follow."*

## An Interview with an Industry Stakeholder



Andy Shulick is Founder of Metamorphosis Management Consulting

Education: BS in Electrical Design Engineering Technology and a Certification in Air Pollution Technology from Penn State University, a MBA from Virginia Commonwealth University, and a Master's Certificate in Project Management from George Washington University

**Why do you work with students in the College of Business?** To get the students to look at the problem/opportunity that they have from a different perspective compared to the text book statement.

**What recommendation would you share with a graduating senior?** Your university degree is your first step in your career. Education is a continuous endeavor, in your present field of study and fields of study that may not even exist today. Strive to excel in the field of work that you love, and do not fear changing your focus.

**Identify your favorite quote.** *"I never lose...Either I win, or I learn!"* Helena Nyman

## Remembrance of a very special lady

Few persons in life make a memorable impression on literally everyone that they meet but that is precisely what kind of person Kianna Rodrigues was in the College of Business. A junior marketing major and Honor's student from Brooklyn, NY; Kianna could never have been accused of being a wallflower content to retreat to the background. No, Kianna was something very very different and for it she will always be remembered.

Early the morning of October 25<sup>th</sup> in Atlanta on a cold highway in Georgia, Kianna's beautiful and most promising life was tragically cut short. In a sudden moment we lost Kianna and for everyone that Kianna had impacted, our heart stopped and our eyes welled with tears.

Why do bad things happen to good people? It is a question as old as humanity. In fact, the oldest book in the Christian Bible, i.e. the Book of Job addresses the very subject. For the hundreds of persons on and off the VSU campus impacted by Kianna, it was a topic that did not constitute an academic debate but rather a sobering reminder of our frailty as human beings.

Unsure if we arrived at a consensus on the subject but in no less than three memorials attended by over 350 persons, a constant refrain regarded how Kianna had impacted so many people in her brief but accomplished life. After all, this was no average lady. A recipient of multiple scholarships including most recently from Altria, membership in a prestigious academic organization, participant in several internships, regular attendee at industry events, but more importantly a mentor and a friend; Kianna achieved more than most 19 year olds and remembrance of her by those who knew her best reflected as much.

Kianna will forever be remembered in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business for her academic rigor and her life and career pursuits but it is her spirit and laugh, charm and uniqueness that will forever penetrate the halls of Singleton even long after the building's current inhabitants have gone on to other places.

It is hard to lose anyone so young but to lose someone so young so sudden; someone so very special is particularly hard. And for why bad things happen to good people, perhaps there is no answer.

One thing we do know, this very special lady will forever be remembered. We love you Kianna!!!

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## Alumni Advisory Board

A big thanks to the Alumni Advisory Board for rolling up their sleeves this semester in taking on curriculum consultation. Teams of successful alums invested considerable time in reviewing coursework to include e.g. syllabi, exams, assignments, etc. but also in looking at how courses relate to other courses in the College. More importantly, the advisory board members provided perspective on industry needs and in doing so complemented continuing curriculum consultation efforts by the Industry Council(s).



## Message from the Dean

Thank you all! Thank you for your invaluable support of our students in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. For a long time, you have been investing your time and labor in some of our best students. From hosting our young professionals for Project Shadow to providing internship/employment opportunities to being a guest instructor in the classroom to contributing to curriculum consultation to serving on the advisory board(s), you are among our very best friends. Now, because of your countless hours and unremitting commitment, our undergraduates are achieving unprecedented success!

It is true! Arguably never before have our students achieved so much. This semester alone we documented over 200 noteworthy student accomplishments. We should add that I suspect that though this list is impressive, we are confident that we did not capture all of our students' achievements in the College.

It is vitally important that we share that none of the preceding accomplishments could have materialized absent the support of you. For that support, we can only say thank you!

Now, we invite you to consider renewing your support of our students but in a new capacity, specifically with an investment in a select scholarship for a top-performing student in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. *Alternatively, you could invest in our new Center for Entrepreneurship and/or Cyber Security Lab. You will perhaps recall that I shared with you that both have opened to a lot of acclaim.* As you are perhaps aware, state and federal dollars are diminishing at VSU resulting in real financial hardships for our students. Regrettably, too many of our very best undergraduates are not returning to school to finish their degree because of reduced funding and fewer scholarship dollars.

Now is the time for action! You know our students better than most and perhaps better than anyone! You know what they are achieving both in and out of the classroom because first and foremost you are investing so much time to see it happen! Now, we need you to consider investing with a donation for a scholarship for these top students. I do not need to tell you what a shame it would be for these young professionals to be unable to finish their degree because of an inability to pay for tuition. It should be noted that Virginia State University is committed to retaining these students and to that end has committed to retaining one of the lowest tuitions in the state.

Again, thank you for everything that you do for our students! Now, we invite you to consider doing even more for them!

Sincerely,

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun  
Dean



Mr. Marvin Allmond is among our most generous benefactors.



Yun Lee hosts students in her office for a conversation about marketing.

Students cap the semester by networking at local corporate Christmas and Holiday parties. Jhadee Gordon at the Cameron Foundation.