



Fall 2017 Issue



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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

This newsletter is dedicated to the graduating class of December 2017 in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University.

### CONGRATULATIONS

"I strongly believe that Virginia State University provides our loyal sons and daughters with a transformative experience. This is evident by the outstanding December 2017 graduates who are ready to make their mark in their communities and the nation."

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President

"Your scholastic achievements speak for themselves and make me proud to share a stage with you at graduation."

Dr. Donald Palm, Provost

"The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business already misses you but because each of you are committed to this place I know that you will be back! Good luck to all of you."

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean

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## 2017: THE FALL SEMESTER IN PICTURES



Ty-Li Brickus-Clark (International Business Minor), Brittany Palmer, and Jujuan Peel (Management majors) participate in a networking event in Richmond.



President Abdullah visits with Kyla Frank before she wins her big race.



The College participates in a lot of entrepreneurship programming like THRIVE.



Kierra Anthony helps lead an AMA carwash fundraiser.



Chante and Emmanuel network with Brad Armstrong.



Sharon Taylor spends time with the Woo Woos.



Center for Entrepreneurship in action.

President Abdullah with Kapri, Tiffany, and Vonyeh. Ramon Moore is President of REA and visits with students.



Students participate in TEDxRVA, attend a Society of Financial Education conference, and regularly recruit students to the College even being joined by the Governor.

## National Association of Black Accountants

Accounting majors in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business are accruing all kinds of career opportunities partly because of the College's partnership with the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA). Recent graduates have inked contracts with KPMG, Deloitte, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ernst & Young, Allmond & Company, Tax Solutions Alliance, Dominion, SunTrust, University of Richmond, and JP Morgan just to name a few. This semester, Tamairah Marshall and Sadonia Sylvester in their leadership positions have continued in the excellence of their predecessors providing countless opportunities. In collaboration with Dr. Hari Sharma and Ms. Rae Morgan the College's NABA chapter has sponsored a visit to Norfolk for the regional conference, a trip to Genworth, recurring workshops, along with volunteer opportunities. It should be noted that Sadonia was rewarded for her efforts with both a Virginia Society of CPA's and a Commercial Real Estate for Women scholarship. When asked to opine on the value of NABA, Sadonia said, *"There is a lot of talent in the accounting/finance ranks at VSU and it is really rewarding to provide our students exposure to leading companies."* Tamairah added, *"Our chapter is about networking but it's about more than that. It is about teamwork and student engagement. Our members are among the most active and successful students at Virginia State University!"*

## Democracy

People under 30 are often accused of not participating in the democratic process but that certainly wasn't the case for either Kyla Frank (Management major) or Marcus Lowery (Marketing major") this election cycle. Kyla in particular because of her initiative to register VSU students was recognized for going above and beyond in promoting the democratic process on campus.



## Undergraduate Bridge, K-12

Dr. Makola Abdullah has committed Virginia State University to providing a transformative experience for young people but not limiting it to college students. Rather, President Abdullah has implored VSU to augment the “undergraduate bridge” and the College of Business has risen to the occasion. In hosting programming like e.g. Girls for a Change or the Richmond Minorities for Engineering Partnership, Singleton Hall is often abuzz with middle and high school students. What’s more is that this semester the College partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters to mentor at Walnut Hill Elementary in Petersburg, continued in supporting Ettrick Elementary, visited dozens of schools to interface with children and to give back. Of course, it’s not all entirely altruistic. In regularly flying the College flag more and more young people in the region are considering VSU for college. The truth is that students, faculty, and staff in The College of Business arguably get more out of the experiences than even the children!



## Top 40 under 40

Eldon Burton has been leading since his days on the gridiron and in the classroom but at 30 he has accomplished a lot since he earned a degree in Business Management. First, it was an internship on Capitol Hill and then an opportunity to work for Senator Mark R. Warner before taking on the responsibility of leading the district office for Congressman Donald McEachin. Yet if you ask him, Eldon most frequently cites teaching undergrads at his alma mater as his most rewarding exercises. Altogether, it's why Burton made the cut and was profiled by Style Weekly in the 2017 Top 40 under 40 edition. Burton is quoted in the profile saying, “*My school means so much to me.*”

## Homecoming Wisdom

For homecoming, over one hundred students participated in a conversation with an alumni panel comprised of mostly recent graduates. Eldon Burton, Kevin Carter, Mykala Daniel, Marnelle Fanfan, Jhadee Gordon, Latasha Harrison, Chelsea Jackson, Bernard Jones, Tiffani Jones, Karen Lee, Tanika Mann, and Cameryn Smith spoke on their experience working for Congress, Dominion, Allianz, City of Petersburg, KPMG, Lidl, VDOT, KPMG, the Federal Reserve, Chesterfield County Public Schools, KPMG, and VSU respectively. The evening before, Kera Bridges and Anjee Diggs taught a class in Singleton. Said Kevin, “*It was really rewarding to come back and to give back.*” For Jhadee and Chelsea, they return so frequently to work with their mentees that it was another opportunity to say hello. Kera added “*I was impressed with the students in class and pleased that they are so motivated.*” Karen elicited the biggest laugh when she ribbed the other panelists on being the elder stateswoman in the group.

## Graduation, In their own words

On December 9<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 Taylor Choyce (Management major) “*I am so proud of my colleagues and me for all of our accomplishments and am excited for the next chapter in our lives.*” Marcellus Barley (Management major) added, “*It wasn’t easy but I sure wasn’t about to give up. Besides, anything worth anything shouldn’t come easy.*” Mahogany Smith (Management/HR major) contributed “*It is a little surreal to arrive at the next chapter in my life after so long in school. The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University constituted a transformative experience for me. Of course I learned a lot from my studies but what is more is that I fell in love with the area and rather than return home I am looking at HR positions in Richmond and intend to stay a long time in the RVA!*” Keana Walker (Management major) added “*My mom is so proud!*”



## Planting

For the second year in a row the

College participated in planting new trees, bushes, and flowers on campus. Dr. Alex Weimer who is a farmer partnered with Jane Harris in VSU Capital Oulay to beautify campus. Weimer’s students pitched in and rolled up their sleeves. They were unquestionably the best dressed planters that day! Of the experience, Cameron Bailey (Accounting major) said “*I liked making my campus even more beautiful and was grateful for the opportunity.*”

## Advising Center and Professional Enhancement

Congrats to the Director of Advising and Professional Enhancement, i.e.

Sharon Taylor on earning certifications as a Career Services Provider and a Personal Finance Education Instructor.



## Benchmarking

The College of Business a few years ago developed a partnership with the Robins School of Business at the University of Richmond and ever since then students make at least one visit a semester to Robins to benchmark. This semester students attended a lecture, took in a women’s soccer game, and visited with faculty.

Chanel Brown (Marketing major) remarked in observation of the Quelly Hall atrium and granite staircase that she was going to



propose for inclusion in Singleton Hall! Marcus Lowery (Marketing major) wanted to jump in to a pickup basketball game at the Robins Center but was in his best suit. Jevon Eason (Management major) just wanted to join the UR students at the frats! In all seriousness, The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business represented well and reminded their peers in Richmond of excellence just thirty miles south of town.

## It's a float!

When Tiffany Tucker (Management/HR major) approached Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun (Dean) with the idea of the College sponsoring a Homecoming 2017 float she didn't need to do a lot of convincing. The Dean immediately jumped at the opportunity to celebrate the College's students. On the big day, students representing each of the College's student organizations participated. Another first for the College, spectators on the parade route could be heard cheering for Dr. Omojokun and for the students. It made for a long day for the participants but after all, homecoming only comes once a year so best to do it right!



## An Interview with a Student



Mahogany Smith graduated in December with a Management/HR major degree; she is from New York and has one of the best smiles in Singleton Hall.

Mahogany aims to pursue a career in Human Resources.

**Regarding your future, what are you most excited for?** To start my career and give back to my community. I want to be an example to young girls that share my circumstances.

**Identify your favorite pastime.** Extreme shopping the mall for hours.

## An Interview with Faculty/Staff



Marcus Hubbard is the Transfer Coordinator and along with Felicia Turner staffs the Student Advisory Board

Place of origin: Brunswick, Virginia

Education: Bachelor's Degree from James Madison University, and Master's Degree from the University of Maryland, College Park

**What do you like most about working with students?** Working with student groups and processing both academic and non-academic life experiences in this transformative period of their lives.

**What has been your biggest contribution here?** Formulating articulation agreements with Virginia Community Colleges in our efforts to increase enrollment and provide more Virginians access to an undergraduate business degree at Virginia State University.

## An Interview with an Alumnus



Cameron Wynn is a 2015 Management graduate

Employment: Warehouse Supervisor at SUPERVALU

Residence: Richmond

**What is the most challenging part of your job?** We operate 7 days a week 24 hours a day, so having a good work life balance is the most challenging part for me.

**Most rewarding?** The opportunity to give someone a job or the leg up to be able to provide for his or her family. Also it is the day to day interactions I have with my associates, building great relationships with them. Most importantly changing the culture of the job.

## An Interview with an Industry Stakeholder



David McCormack, President of Waukeshaw Development, Inc.

Education: HS - Midlothian HS, BS - VA Tech, Geophysics, MA - VCU, Creative Writing

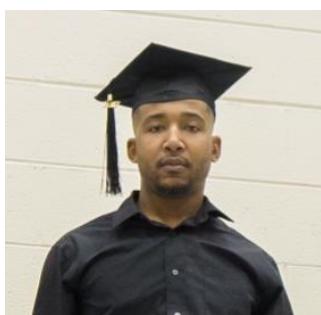
Place of Origin: East Orange, NJ

Under Dave's leadership, more than 450,000 square feet reflecting a value of more than \$70 million has been invested in renovations.

**What are your biggest goals and challenges for your businesses?** We are in small markets throughout the state, and challenging the conventional wisdom of "Location Location Location".

**What is your advice for our students?** You must get creative and find ways to do things differently and be successful doing things that the 'experts' say will not work.

## An Interview with a Student



Marcellus Barley graduated in December with a Management degree; he is from Danville and worked the equivalent of a full-time job while in school.

Marcellus aims to pursue a career in Athletics/Sports Management.

**What are you most proud of?** Persevering and graduating. Where I am from there aren't a lot of black males that went to college and did well. I didn't give up and I didn't do what so many others from my community did including going to jail. It's a part of my testimony. The death of my uncle didn't

discourage me but because I knew he wanted me to succeed his loss only encouraged me.

**What recommendation would you share with a freshman?** In order to succeed here requires that you stay focused, take advantage of networking, and don't let external situations prevent you from getting your work done. Only after you do your work can you party.

## Google Analytics Service

This semester Patrice Perry-Rivers co-launched the VSU Center for Entrepreneurship Google Analytics Service with Dr. Yun Lee, and Dr. Venkat Mummalaneni to help local small businesses with their e-marketing efforts. Perry-Rivers personally went into the city of Petersburg and identified local small business participants. A faculty-led student team from the VSU Center for Entrepreneurship will prepare an initial Economic Development Marketing Brochure for the City of Petersburg which includes information about the unique characteristics of the City, and benefits to companies locating there. A description of the proposed key elements and features of the brochure are detailed below:

- Petersburg “Business Success Stories”
- Community History
- Quality of Life Summary and Resident Demographic Profile
- Existing industries
- Transportation Systems
- Higher education/workforce training opportunities
- Available sites & building

A faculty-led student team will also prepare an initial Economic Development Website template for the City of Petersburg. Objectives include:

- Attract new businesses highlighting how Petersburg is an attractive place to live and work
- Summarizing available higher education and workforce training opportunities
- Describe the success stories of existing businesses who have located to Petersburg
- Provide resources on how to launch successful businesses in Petersburg

For the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business, the Center for Entrepreneurship is yet another vehicle to fulfilling the mission to demonstrating continuous improvement in engagement, innovation and societal impact. This mission perhaps explain why the College for 2017 was recognized as the best business school in the country at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). Recipient of the HBCU Digest/Thurgood Marshall College Fund award, The College of Business shares accreditation with the 5% of most elite business schools in the world and its namesake was America's first black billionaire businessman. Also of note, President Makola M. Abdullah was named the 2017 HBCU Male President of the Year. The College congratulates President Abdullah!! Well deserved!!

*The College for 2017 was recognized as the best business school in the country at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). Recipient of the HBCU Digest/Thurgood Marshall College Fund award, The College of Business shares accreditation with the 5% of most elite business schools in the world.*

## Youngest elected female to state legislature

In a semester the College of Business hosts over two hundred industry guests to interface with students but it's not just industry that stops in to teach. This semester Lashrecse Aird taught a class in Singleton. The youngest elected female to the General Assembly, Lashrecse is a proud VSU graduate. Her session regarded motivating students to be leaders in everything they do irrespective of their chosen career.



## On the News

Ai'Jalon McGhee (Marketing major) spent the day shadowing Whitney Harris at ABCNews. Ai'Jalon aims to pursue a career relevant to news broadcasting so for her the opportunity to meet with Whitney was special. A journalism student when at the University of Maryland College Park, Whitney is a rising star in the television industry. This semester she has invested in the College of Business including guest teaching in Singleton but to host Ai'Jalon was particularly rewarding recalling her experiences in undergrad. Equally rewarding was the experience for Ai'Jalon who spent time on the TV set. Said, McGhee, "*Whitney was a terrific host. She is so dedicated. She has to get to work every morning at something like 5 a.m. I love her work ethic and I really appreciated her preparing me for my future.*"



## Cyber Warriors

The arrival of Thomson Reuters in Richmond with the opening of their cyber security facility constituted an opportunity for the College to initiate a new partnership for our cyber warriors. Already, students attended the grand opening with the Governor and Mayor, participated in project shadow, hosted senior executive in the classroom, and are conversing with the company in regards to additional opportunities. Rarely has a company so soon to arrive in the region commit to investing in our students as this organization recognized by Forbes as a Top Regarded company. The objective regards protecting this nation's most important assets from cyber attacks and who better to do it than the College's graduates. Still a new program, the cyber security concentration has graduates in places like the Federal Reserve, KPMG, Deloitte, IBM, Michelin, Lockheed Martin, General Electric, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, etc. The College looks forward to adding our newest partner to the list! Said Sam Smith (MISY major), *I get excited every time I visit the Thomson Reuters cyber facility because I would love to work there!*



## Society of Financial Education

Students are participating in Society of Financial Education training including attending a conference as part of the College's hands-on financial management program.

## Tourism is a BIG industry

Few industries employ as many persons as tourism and it is why the College prioritizes its relationship with Rita McClenney (CEO) at the Virginia Tourism Corporation. This semester Mahogany Smith and Mabertine Pierre (Management majors) along with Sydney Yao (Marketing minor) visited with Rita to learn about the magnitude of the tourism industry. The ladies have all conveyed an interest in pursuing careers relevant to what they learned and Mabertine even applied for graduate school at NYU for the creative arts.



Already a lot of graduates of the College are doing big things in the industry and finding reward thereto. From alums managing events to putting on conferences to marketing resorts the College is well represented. The College even has a recent graduate that is a flight attendant.

As the tourism industry continues to bloom, the College will continue to nurture and to grow our efforts for what constitutes a BIG industry.

## Super Bowl Ads

A measuring stick as it relates to success in marketing regards production of an ad for the most watched show of TV, i.e. the Super Bowl. The College of Business has two graduates at the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Brandcenter earning their graduate degrees at an institution that has produced nearly forty Super Bowl ads. For Vanessa Brown and Mykala Daniel the opportunity to work with the best students on the biggest stage of them all only validates their experience and training in The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. Should we expect a Super Bowl ad from either Vanessa or Mykala? Tune in come January to find out.

## The Art and Science of Business Writing

Dr. Alex Weimer authored a textbook entitled “The Art and Science of Business Writing” that was recently published by KendallHunt Publishing. Aimed at an audience of undergraduate business students, the textbook will be incorporated in the curriculum at the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University. Weimer, an attorney by profession with a degree from Duke University, hopes to see other institutions of learning adopt the book. Weimer shared that the impetus for his authorship regarded a deficiency as it related to relevant textbooks. For Dr. Weimer, the title of his book is appropriate because of his emphasis on “practical” teaching methods. Weimer teaches Business Communications and Business Law at the College of Business.

## More Pictures



## Learning from leaders

The College’s Center for Entrepreneurship includes aspirations as it relates to co-working so who better to host for an instructional session than the best in the business. Doug and Polly White are owners of Gather, *a co-working space in Richmond that offers collaborative space, private offices and conference rooms for freelancers, entrepreneurs, and work-from-home professionals*. Neither Doug nor Polly are strangers to the College but for their visit this semester they voluntarily shared the secret sauce for success pertinent to launching and growing a leading space for entrepreneurs. Students including staff for the Center for Entrepreneurship attended their workshop and even visited with Doug and Polly in Richmond to benchmark and to observe. The Center for Entrepreneurship is a product of Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun’s vision and is administered by Patrice Perry-Rivers and Jonathan Young along with a select group of student staff. Workshops and training is offered including online. Most recently, the Center began offering curriculum that can count towards earning college credit. Up next, the Center now has the secret sauce so watch out!



## Gamesshow

The Phi Beta Lambda chapter in The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business this semester visited with 6,000 middle school students! At an event at Richmond International Raceway put on by ChamberRVA, undergrads met with students from every middle school in the region.

The invite to the College of Business did not regard another tired college/career fair but rather a hands-on experiential exercise. Specifically, Phi Beta Lambda was tasked with creating a gamesshow that would accommodate competition and learning.

First, the students had to decide on a gamesshow and they selected an academic Jeopardy. Second, they needed a gamesshow host; step in Terrill Shephard (Accounting major). Third, a lot of planning, manpower, and time was requisite. What resulted was widely recognized as one of the best learning experiences at the event dubbed Mission Tomorrow.

The middle school students competed by identifying brands of major corporations. The objective regarded encouraging children to think about the power of identity and what the middle schoolers' wanted for their own identity. By the end of the day, the Phi Beta Lambda students had made a favorable impression on countless children and it was an awesome recruiting opportunity even if it will be a few years before any of the kids are ready for college! A big congrats to the following students for their outstanding work; Rachel Ajibolade (MISY major), Jasmine Baskett (Marketing major), Jevon Eason (Management major), Elette Ocloo (Management major), Ivanka Ocloo (Management major), Kamya Reid (Management major), and Terrill Shephard (Accounting major).



## Student Accomplishments

Check out our students' fall 2017 semester accomplishments at  
<http://business.vsu.edu/news/2017/12/fall-2017-student-accomplishments.php>

## Another entrepreneur(s)

In this newsletter's preceding edition(s) readers learned about four students with successful businesses; add to the list Aiyana Glover and L'nique Freeman (Marketing and Management majors respectively).

### Message from the Dean

At the end of another calendar year it is rewarding to reflect on 2017 and all of our accomplishments. For one, the College was awarded reaffirmation of accreditation by the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, International.

For another, we were recognized as the best business school in the country at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU).

Recipient of the HBCU Digest/Thurgood Marshall College Fund award, students along with faculty and alums accrued top honors including for example Phi Beta Lambda students besting the competition from thirteen



other institutions of higher learning. For faculty, Dr. Yun Lee earned the Best Paper Award from the Academy of Business Research. For alums, Eldon Burton was recognized as a Top 40 Under 40 recipient by Style Weekly. Students, faculty, and staff were regularly featured in media including Earon Chandler (Management major) being profiled on NBC for shadowing Harry Black. Kapri Armstead and Mabertine Pierre (Management majors) along with Marcus Lowery and Michaela Nelson (Marketing majors) were cast in a new TV commercial. Jonathan Young was regularly interviewed in newspapers and on the television and social media posts for the College earned over 200,000 views. Also of note, faculty published more than a dozen journal articles and Dr. Alex Weimer authored a textbook that was published by KendallHunt. Between students, faculty, and staff the College was represented at over 190 conferences and networking events including a visit to the New York Stock Exchange. Students attended events with the Governor, members of the General Assembly, local elected officials, and hundreds of business leaders. Students studied in Italy, Greece, and Morocco. Students were inducted in to the Beta Gamma Sigma (BGS) International Honor Society and the College's advisor Ms. Sharon Taylor was recognized by BGS for her excellence; Taylor also earned two certifications this semester. Also of note, Dr.(s) Aurelia Donald, Mark Kunze, Patrice Perry-Rivers, George Weimer, and Mr. Louis Dabney spent countless hours coaching students while Mrs. Portia Robinson ensured our technology labs functioned. The College even sponsored a Homecoming Float! Michaela Nelson was selected for a publication profile because of her contributions, Dr.(s) Venkat Mummalaneni and Patrice Perry-Rivers launched a VSU Center for Entrepreneurship Google Analytics Service, several students signed up to mentor in Petersburg with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Dr. Art Wharton was appointed to the Associate Editorial Board of the African Economic and Business Review and Dr. Mabel Qiu served on the International Association of Business and Economics Executive Board. Jonathan Young was sworn in to office, Mr. Robert Elliott regularly hosted his office hours in the Academic Center for Excellence, and Sharon Taylor's team advised 1,000 students. In every regard, the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business performed so well.

Sincerely,

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun (Dean)  
rides on the  
Reginald F. Lewis College of Business  
Homecoming 2017 float.

