

SIGMA TAU DELTA INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY



SCROLL

A Publication of Alpha Delta Upsilon Chapter

*Virginia State University
Department of Languages & Literature*

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

SIGMA TAU DELTA (ΣΤΔ)

Chapter name: Alpha **Delta** Upsilon
Club flower: The **Red** Rose
Club colors: **Cardinal** and Black
Club motto: Sincerity, **Truth**, Design

SPRING 2025 OFFICERS

President: Aralyse French
Vice President: Lia Gunn
Secretary: John S. Poitier Jr.
Treasurer: Marcellus Drew
Historian: Ja'Nice Andrews-Martin

FALL 2024 OFFICERS

President: Aniyah Barnett
Vice President: Aralyse French
Secretary: John S. Poitier Jr.
Treasurer: Lia Gunn
Historian: Ja'Nice Andrews-Martin

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Leah M. Thomas



Spring 2025 Sigma Tau Delta Induction Ceremony

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

VSU's chapter Alpha Delta Upsilon of Sigma Tau Delta was founded in 1994. Sigma Tau Delta's vision is "Transforming the World with Words." The mission of the honor society is to confer distinction for high achievement in English language and literature, to provide cultural stimulation, to cultivate all aspects of the discipline of English, to promote exemplary character and good fellowship, to exhibit high standards of academic excellence, and to foster literacy.

SENIOR PROFILES

President



President Aralyse French inducts Sigma Tau Delta candidates.

Aralyse French is a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in English at Virginia State University. She has served as the vice president and as the president of Alpha Delta Upsilon, VSU's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. Recently, she has worked on events to support those interested in English through Sigma Tau Delta and growing the Society's membership. Aralyse is a proud member of VSU's Honor college. She has an interest in creative writing, leading to her membership in VSU's new creative writing club Black Ink Collective. During spring 2022 she joined VSU's film club to support her interest in film and creative writing. After graduation she plans to further her education.

Vice President



Vice President Lia Gunn inducts Sigma Tau Delta candidates.

Lia Gunn is a graduating senior at Virginia State University. Pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a minor in Spanish. While at VSU, she participated in many extracurricular activities that surrounded her with other creatives. Some examples include, the International English Honors Society, formally known as Sigma Tau Delta, the Black Ink Collective, and the Riverside Reel Masters. Lia currently holds several EBOARD positions including the Vice President of Sigma Tau Delta and the Historian for Sigma Delta Pi. Some of her hobbies include journaling, traveling, and trying new foods.

After graduation, Lia plans to work in downtown Richmond while she studies for the LSAT. She aspires to be admitted into Law School Fall of 2027. Her long-term goals include running a marathon, practicing corporate law and eventually opening her own firm.

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Historian



Historian Ja'Nice Andrews-Martin is wearing Alpha Delta Upsilon's custom-designed polo shirt.

Ja'Nice Andrews-Martin is a senior. She will be receiving her bachelor's degree in English with a minor in secondary education. Ja'Nice is a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS). She is Historian for the Alpha Delta Upsilon, VSU's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. Ja'Nice has received scholarships from the Masonic Temple Fraternity and Eastern Star Sorority for her continued matriculation at VSU. She has lineage with both houses. During the summer, Ja'Nice works as a camp counselor with the enrichment program Jacob's Ladder that helps at-risk, gifted youth. Ja'Nice plans to work as a high school English teacher before returning to graduate school for her master's degree in folklore studies and, in time, receive her PhD in English to become a college professor.



MEMBER ACTIVITIES



Ms. Uyen Bach presents Treasurer Marcellus Drew with the highest-honors certificate.

The Work We've Done with Sigma Tau Delta & the Department of Languages and Literature

By Marcellus Drew

Sigma Tau Delta, with the Languages and Literature Department, has succeeded in hosting nine successful events on campus, all of which resulted in meaningful settings wherein students shared their creative works of poetry and other written pieces, engaged in discourse with well-established scholars of the English language, as well as learned more about the peers involved with the groups that study language and literature. As a member of the Alpha Delta Upsilon chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, it is an honor to work, study, converse, and host events with my peers.

Sigma Tau Delta and other organizations under the Languages and Literature category have held several events this semester, but the poetry and creative writing readings the organizations have held this semester

have been the most successful. During these events, students who may not have felt comfortable with their works were able to read them before an audience, receiving honest feedback. This encouraged students from our university to participate in enriching, after-class literary activities where their creativity was not stifled but encouraged. I have also read material at these events, and doing so has improved my confidence in the works I have been drafting for the past five years.

Another stand-out aspect of the Languages and Literature Department's efforts this semester is the teamwork among both Sigma Tau Delta and Sigma Delta Pi to host cultural events relevant to both African and Hispanic cultures. One such instance was during the film and speech given by Fulbright Scholar Dr. Antumi Toasijé, Spanish Colombian historian, on "The African Presence and Influence in Spain, from Prehistoric Times to Present," supported by the Dr. Lena M. Whitt Endowment fund. This event exposed the audience to the cultural influences that Africa has on Spain and was an informed showing of heritage and tradition.

The Department of Languages and Literature also hosted a Dr. Lena M. Whitt Endowed Lecture given by Dr. Robin R. Means Coleman, a professor of Media Studies and of African American Studies and African Studies, consistent with the discussion entitled, "Black Horror Films and the Quest for Social Justice." During this lecture, the distinguished speaker gave an informed examination of the historical significance of Black actors and their negative depiction in not just horror, but the entirety of Hollywood. Using previous films' depictions of Black actors as a reference, Dr. Coleman successfully demonstrated how much Black actors have grown into respectable characters in film. By explaining the historically known ideation that Black actors were made to

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die first in early horror films, and discussing how the Black actors' growth into respectable main characters in recent horror films by writers like Jordan Peele, Dr. Coleman gave an informed presentation on the history of these portrayals in horror films, as well as how such characterizations have changed over time.

There was also the induction ceremony for new officers into Sigma Tau Delta and Sigma Delta Pi, and a ceremony highlighting the highest earning literary students for the semester. On a personal level, this event was extremely important to me because it not only gave me a larger incentive to continue excelling at my academics, but there was an immense feeling of pride when my fellow peers and I were pinned by the previous officers. As a student who works hard to ensure that the first four years at university will be my last, I made a remark to the department professors sitting nearby that went, "who knew that if you went to class and did your homework, you'd get rewarded?" This remark seems elementary and such attributes should be tangible for most. However, I recognize that this is not the case; before my enrollment at Virginia State University, I was unsure about a career in writing because I had been told by family members that an English degree was only suitable for a career in education. As such, my previous attempts at college were failures because I was enrolled in courses I did not want to study. Now that I am enrolled in course material that is relevant to my desired career path, Technical Writing, my grades are stellar.

Sigma Tau Delta and organizations affiliated with the Languages and Literature Department have had a semester marked with enriching events wherein students got involved in extracurricular writing activities. These organizations' efforts are made possible

by the members, planners, professors, and others that have made and will continue to make these events possible.



Secretary John S. Poitier Jr. reads
Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise."

AWP and Angela

By John S. Poitier Jr.

Self-acceptance is the precursor to destinic recognition; for the validation of our talent via external sources, while comforting, does nothing to encourage our artistic growth. Rather, it is through spending time with one's own mind that we develop the ability to recognize who we truly are. These few words embody the entirety of what the AWP Convention and Bookfair meant to me. Advised by the brilliant author of *An American Marriage*, Ms. Tayari Jones, and mentored by the extraordinary Issac Hughes Green, I found myself straddling a fence between cloud nine and heavenly ascension as I joined thousands of writers at the AWP Convention in the City of Angels and overpriced Ubers: Los Angeles, California. As one of five students selected nationwide, and the only male student fellow, I surprisingly never felt

pressured to "over-perform," but simply acted in my best capacity alongside the stellar fellows who had been chosen with me. Behind every corner was an opportunity: a journal open for submissions or a panel analyzing the works of authors like Octavia Butler, who crafted the art of writing in such intricate ways. And behind every door was a chance to connect, interact, and come alive in a world usually restricted to black ink on white pages.

However, the one thing that elevated this exemplary experience, beyond the fully covered flight and hotel room in the Westin Bonaventure (twenty-fourth floor, not too shabby, not too shabby)—was a sighting of Angela Bassett, filming her hit TV show *9-1-1*! I was in awe of Mrs. Bassett and her work. Witnessing an artist within their element, as I had been the entire four days beforehand, made this experience a guaranteed success.

To summarize, I end with the quoted words of Ms. Tayari Jones: "Black words are Black wealth." My internal wealth of knowledge had not only been stirred by this encounter, but blessed beyond insurmountable belief. To anyone reading this—never allow your words to be staggered or hindered by anyone or anything. You can do anything. You are everything.



John S. Poitier Jr. is
inducted into Sigma Tau Delta.

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Ms. Uyen Bach presents Hannah Smith with the highest-honors award.

The Black Ink Collective

By Hannah Smith

The Black Ink Collective is Virginia State University's creative writing club, and we're all about keeping creativity alive. Whether you're into poetry, flash writing, storytelling, or just love words in general, this is the space for you. We're a growing community of writers, thinkers, and artists who come together to share our work, get inspired, and support one another on our creative journeys.

At our weekly meetings, you'll find open discussions, spontaneous writing sessions, and the occasional themed challenge to keep things fun and fresh. We believe everyone has a voice and a story worth telling—whether you've been writing for years or just starting out. Our goal is to create a welcoming space where ideas can grow, passions can thrive, and creativity can flourish without pressure or judgment.

We're not just a club—we're a collective of people who genuinely enjoy being here. Or, as Kevin Parker,

one of our regular attendees, puts it: "I love the vibes here."

If you're looking for a place to write, connect, and just vibe out with other creative minds, the Black Ink Collective is the place to be. We'd love for you to join us!



Ms. Uyen Bach presents Mykhia Thorpe with the highest-honors award.

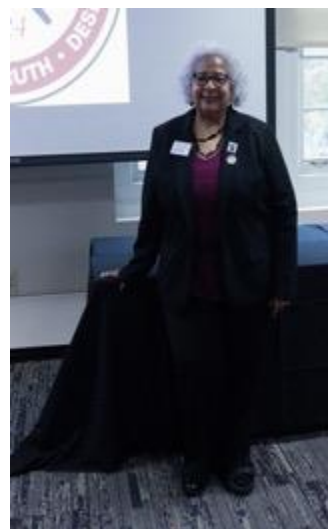
ELAH: Improving My Skillset

By Mykhia Thorpe

During the 2024–2025 school year, I interned with the Department of Languages and Literature under Dr. Leah Thomas. For two semesters, I was able to work in research, promotion, events, and department organizations. In the Fall semester, I worked with Dr. Thomas on her research on Virginia Woolf by creating a bibliography of scholarly sources related to her research topic. This research was focused on Woolf and the eighteenth-century. I found this assignment to be fun and informative, as I learned more about how to search for sources using the school library and more about Virginia

Woolf herself. I also created several flyers for department events and the 2024 Fall research series. This was a good test of my creative ability, and I did enjoy creating those flyers and being able to help with promoting these events. For the Spring semester, my internship brought me to *One Twenty-One*. After a brief period of inactivity, I was able to help pick it back up and get it ready for a fourth issue. We revamped the website, the social media, and I created a flyer to hang around campus and spread the word. Additionally, I had the privilege of being a part of Black Ink Collective, the new creative writing club led by Hannah Smith. Black Ink Collective has been my favorite part of my internship, as it has given me a comfortable space to write as well as meet other passionate writers. The end-of-semester Black Ink farewell event was a major success, and it was a pleasure working with Hannah to pull it off. My internship this school year was an amazing opportunity that helped me improve my skillset.

2025 Languages and Literature Honors Dinner



Sigma Tau Delta member Ms. Deborah Howard, VSU Title IX Coordinator, was the guest speaker at the Honors Dinner.



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President Aralyse French pins new member Kiearie Fitzgerald.



Former President Aniyah Barnette pins new member Harlem Norton.



Serenity McLaurin receives highest-honors certificate.



Joseph Sutton receives highest-honors certificate.



The Sigma Tau Delta candidates were inducted.

2024-2025 Sigma Tau Delta Members

Ja'Nice Andrews-Martin
Aniyah Barnette
Marcellus Drew
Kiearie Fitzgerald
Aralyse French
Lia Gunn
Serenity McLaurin
Harlem Norton
John S. Poitier Jr.
Hannah Smith
Janae Spates
Joseph Sutton
Mykhia Thorpe



2024-2025 COLLABORATIONS



Poe Party: Impromptu Ekphrasis Haiku
7 November 2024



Open Mic Night
12 February 2025



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VSU Yearbook Photo
6 March 2025



Black Ink Collective
6 March 2025



VSU Open House
29 March 2025



121, ΣΤΔ, & BIC



Black Ink Collective Farewell Event
17 April 2025



In Gratitude

VSU's chapter Alpha Delta Upsilon of Sigma Tau Delta thanks Ashlee Porter for taking the photographs at the 2025 Languages and Literature Honors Dinner. We also thank the Department of Languages and Literature, the Writing Studio, and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences for their support. We especially thank Ms. Uyen Bach, Dr. Michael McClure, Dr. Jerry Crawford, and Dr. Isis Walton.



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